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MEGATRAVELLER
Trouble in Paradise

*Wesley Kawata
and Michelle Sturgeon*

TWILIGHT: 2000
Sheltie Holiday

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SPACE: 1889
**Secrets of
the Ancients**

Lester W. Smith

STAR WARS
On the Dark Side

Marcus L. Rowland

GDW
GAMES



BATTLETECH is taking one giant 'Mech-step forward in time.

To be precise, twenty years.

THE YEAR IS 3050.

The 4th Succession War has been over for 20 years.

The Rasalhague Military District broke with the Draconis Combine, forming the Free Rasalhague Republic.

Houses Steiner and Davion gradually merge to form the Federated Commonwealth.

In an unexpected show of strength, the Combine military, under Theodore Kurita, stops the Federated Commonwealth invasion of 3039 cold.

ComStar unveils a huge 'Mech army to garrison its thousands of installations throughout the Inner Sphere.

Thomas Marik builds a united and strong Free Worlds League, which takes its rightful place in the Inner Sphere.

Romano Liao fends off a Canopus-Andurien invasion and rebuilds the Capellan Confederation from the ashes left by her demented father.

Vast amounts of Star League Technology appear from strange quarters.

Don't think of your character as twenty years older...think of his son as being ready for battle.



HEIR TO THE DRAGON

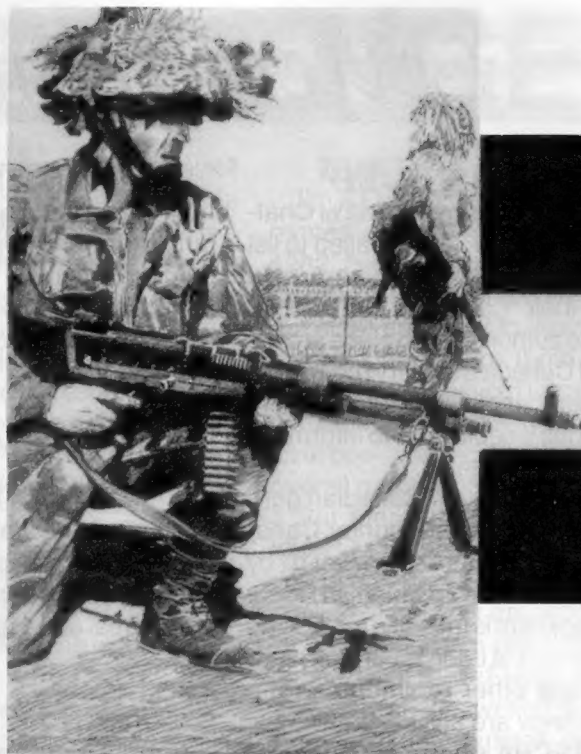
A BATTLETECH Novel by Bob Charrette

A flash of steel, a thin crimson line, and a foamy gurgle of confusion marked the

When I was a kid, we had a sheltie—a Shetland sheepdog. They are cute little dogs that look sort of like miniature col-lies, except ours was black and white instead of Lassie-colored.

I always wondered why they were so small (ditto for the ponies), until I saw the island they came from, and then I understood. The Shetland Islands have a heck of a wind most of the time, and anything more than two feet tall would get blown clear to Shanghai. Of course, I'm more than two feet tall—but I had my M16/203 to hold me down. I don't know how the sheep manage.

Shetland sheep look just like regular sheep—not that regular sheep are any thrill. Sheep are not cute, fluffy bundles of white wool with blue ribbons around their necks like in the kids' books. They are grayish-brown and greasy, and they smell terrible. It's the lanolin or something—I don't remember my wool sweaters smelling like that. The only thing that smells worse than a wet sheep is a leg of mutton being boiled. I got to know both odors real well.



Sheltie Holiday

Loren K. Wiseman

This adventure takes the PCs to an out-of-the-way corner of the globe and serves as an adventure supplement for the *Survivors' Guide to the United Kingdom*. The characters are sent to the Shetland (or Zetland) Islands on a mission for the British government and run aground during a storm, losing their boat and much of their equipment. The group members must complete their mission, secure transport, and make their way back to their rendezvous point over 100 kilometers to the south. This adventure requires one character with Small Boat Handling (SBH) skill.



*Right
Heart
Core*



JAMES J. WARREN



James J. Warren (who prefers to be called "Red" for inexplicable reasons—he is not red-haired) is one of a wave of oil workers who came to the North Sea when jobs in the American oil industry went into the doldrums in the 1980s. When the American market picked up, Red had "taken a shine to them li'l horsey critters" and stayed on with Jet-Texas/UK, Ltd.—Anglo-American petroleum industry trouble-

shooters specializing in the problems peculiar to North Shore oil platforms. Warren had only two years of junior college, but he has an affinity with machinery that boggles the mind. A member of the grease-under-the-fingernails school of engineering, Red can coax performance out of machines most people would have long ago sold for scrap.

Warren was evacuated when the oil platforms were abandoned (shortly after the strategic nuclear strikes on industrial targets began) in late-1997. He survived long enough to come to the attention of the British government, which sought anyone with oil industry experience. Red proved to be a godsend to the North Sea oil reclamation projects, and only his insistence that he alone could guide a party to the Shetlands for spare parts persuaded a reluctant government to let him go.

Red carries a .38 Special revolver, but he is not a very good shot and prefers to "let the professionals do the fighting." He will use his weapon only as a last resort. Red has friends among the islanders, something the group will need to accomplish its mission.

Red has skill levels as specified for Novice NPCs on page 16 of the *Referee's Manual*, except for the following skills: MEC 100, MTL 60, and ELC 80. He speaks no other languages but English, at LNG 100.

NPC Motivation Results: *Heart Four:* Warren is a very amiable, friendly man—so much so that one of his old buddies once said, "Red's so friendly he doesn't repair things. They get to like him so well they start working again as a personal favor!" *Spade Jack:* Pomposity, which in Warren's case has been changed by his extreme amiability into a tendency toward loudmouthed boastfulness—a harmless but extremely irritating characteristic. Were it not for the fact that he has a talent for machinery that few can equal, someone would undoubtedly have shot him long ago just to get him to shut up. He is a Novice NPC.

Referee's Note: The PCs should be told in no uncertain terms that Red is the most valuable asset the British government is risking for the present expedition. To return without Warren is to fail, for all practical purposes.

OVERVIEW OF THE ADVENTURE

The characters are on a mission for what's left of the British government. The North Sea oil platforms represent one of the key factors in Britain's recovery from the war. The British government has made it a policy to try to reopen as many platforms as possible and is expending many assets to keep the trickle of oil flowing. An important part of this continuing project is locating spare parts for the wellheads. Recently, evidence of a small store of previously undiscovered replacement parts has turned up. The British government believes these parts are somewhere on the Shetland Islands and has sent a group to secure them.

The Shetlands are fairly remote (by the standards of 2000), and they have not been visited by government representatives (or anyone else, for that matter) for quite some time. British restoration efforts have not gotten to the more northern of the oil platforms—those nearer to Scotland are considered better candidates for reopening.

Boats are scarce, and their use is carefully controlled for optimum utility. The government cannot afford to divert one of the normal platform resupply boats, so it has chosen instead to provide the characters with a small fiberglass sailboat (a civilian pleasure craft in its previous life) and a guide who claims to know where the parts are located (James "Red" Warren, an American oil worker from Texas who was one of the last evacuated from the northernmost offshore platforms). The party members will be transported by a British resupply boat to a point east of the Orkneys (see map). From there they are expected to be able to make their way to the Shetlands.

The adventure begins when a storm drives the boat aground on Mainland (the largest of the Shetlands), forcing a slight change in the characters' plans. Now, in addition to locating the spares, they must secure a boat to transport them in and must make their way to a prearranged rendezvous point in one week's time.

Details of the boat are not presented here. Each character will be allowed to bring along up to 30 kilograms of gear (no vehicles), and each will be provided with a week's supply of food and water.

The shipwreck is a good chance to strip the group of mortars and other heavy weapons (they won't be needed and would only make the mission too easy, in any case).

BACKGROUND

In the world of 2000, oil is scarce. Oil was the lifeblood of modern warfare and the single key component to everyone's warmaking capability. Oil facilities, therefore, became prime targets, and the petroleum industry was disrupted on a worldwide scale. Few oil fields are operating, and even fewer refineries are in working condition. When the nukes began flying and it became obvious that refinery facilities were on the top of the target lists, no oil workers in their right minds stayed on the job. Anything connected with oil shut down due to lack of workers. Facilities not subject to nuclear strikes or conventional military attacks were fought over by numerous rivals (former national governments, marauders, "new" national governments, and tin-pot local dictators). Those lucky enough to avoid the ravages of war suffered from the forces of nature: Workers don't tend to shut things up properly when

fleeing for their lives. Dirt, wind, rain, and rust finished the job started by plutonium and plastique. By 2000, most oil facilities were scrap metal.

The deep-water platforms of the North Sea were no exception, but the need for oil was so great that the British government (or what was left of it—in 2000, government control covered only the area south of the Thames and east of the Isle of Wight) was willing to risk much in order to reopen some of the wells.

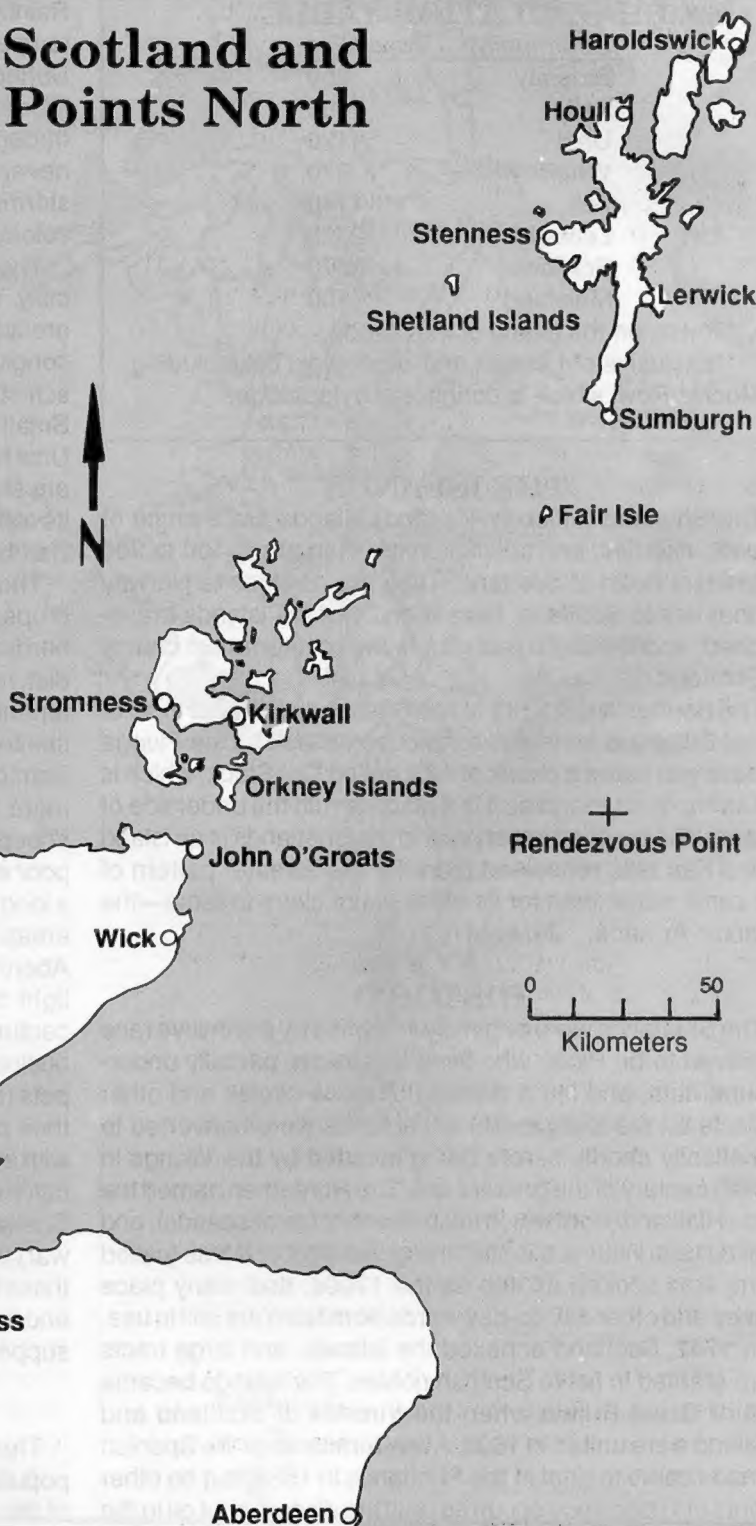
Restoring function to an abandoned well is not a simple task. Reopening one that's 50 meters underwater and more

than 100 kilometers from shore is difficult. Knowledgeable technicians must be found, persuaded to cooperate, fed, sheltered, and protected. Damaged or severely corroded equipment must be repaired or replaced (assuming you can find the spares). The biggest problem is finding people with the skills and technical know-how to do the job.

TWILIGHT: 2000



Scotland and Points North



POPULATION DATA

Population hasn't officially been counted since the war, so the PCs are not aware of this data. It is presented to indicate the relative sizes of various communities to referees who might want to set other adventures on these islands. About a third of the populations given will be of appropriate age and condition to be fighters, but these will act only in defense of their homes. For the purposes of the table, each island counts as a single community, except for Mainland, which has two towns.

POPULATION TABLE

<i>Community</i>	<i>Population</i>
Bressay	250
Fetlar	80
Unst	1120
Whalsay	970
Yell	1140
Lerwick*	2720
Scalloway*	1870
Mainland**	400

*Towns on the island of Mainland.

**Exclusive of Lerwick and Scalloway, but including Muckle Row, which is connected by a bridge.

THE ISLANDS

The Shetland (officially, Zetland) Islands are a chain of islands, skerries, and specks on the map about 100 to 200 kilometers north of Scotland. They are as close to Norway as they are to Scotland. Less than 20 of the islands are inhabited, and the chain represents the northernmost county in Scotland.

The northernmost point in the Shetlands (indeed, in all of Great Britain) is an island/lighthouse called Muckle Flugga (unless you count a chunk of rock called Out Stack, which is not so much an island as it is a place to ruin the underside of a boat). The southernmost point in the Shetlands is an island called Fair Isle, renowned more for the sweater pattern of the same name than for its other major claim to fame—the Spanish Armada.

HISTORY

The Shetlands were originally inhabited by a primitive race (believed to be Picts) who lived in sunken, partially underground huts, and left a number of stone circles and other artifacts on the islands. The inhabitants were converted to Christianity shortly before being invaded by the Vikings in the 8th century of the present era. The Norsemen named the place Hjalaland (from which the present name descends), and their cultural influence is still strong. A dialect of Norse (called Norn) was spoken as late as the 1700s, and many place names and other day-to-day words from Norn are still in use.

In 1742, Scotland annexed the islands, and large tracts were granted in fief to Scottish nobles. The islands became part of Great Britain when the thrones of Scotland and England were united in 1603. A few remnants of the Spanish Armada came to grief in the Shetlands in 1588, but no other events of importance occurred until the discovery of oil in the

North Sea brought a giant influx of money and jobs (and outsiders) in the late 20th century.

The Shetlands were physically untouched by the war except for the Soviet Spetsnaz raid on the giant oil terminal at Sullom. Recently, however, a group of Soviets has landed on the islands. The actions and intentions of this group are described later in this article.

CLIMATE, GEOGRAPHY, DEMOGRAPHY

The Gulf Stream current and other factors combine to ameliorate the extreme northern latitude of the Shetlands. Rainfall and climate are similar to those in northern Scotland: temperate, with no dry season and with long, cool summers. During storms, the cold arctic winds can gust as high as 160 kilometers per hour, but the winds are continuous and strong throughout the year. Due to the islands' northerly latitude, it never gets completely dark in the summer, and summer storms can give sky, sea, and land an eerie, almost unearthly coloration.

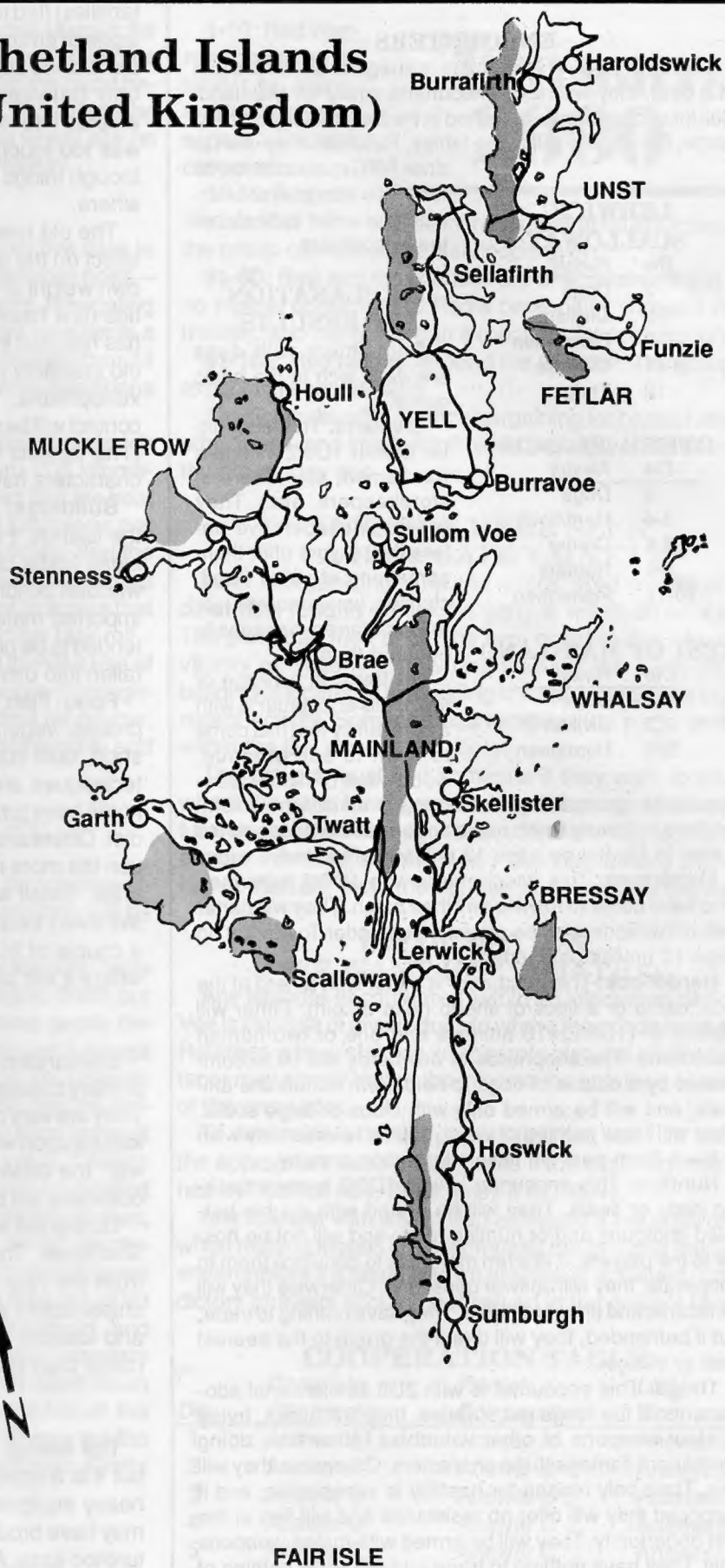
The Shetlands are identical to northern Scotland geologically. The eastern face of Mainland (the largest island in the group) consists of various types of sandstone, marls and conglomerates, while the west is made up of metamorphic schists and gneisses with occasional igneous intrusions. Small deposits of peat are exploited for fuel. The island of Unst had talc in economically exploitable quantities (the mines are shut down now), and several islands have small deposits of iron ore in quantities too small to bother with before the war, but now used in a primitive local ironmongery.

The soil of most of the islands is rocky and poorly suited to crops, and the islanders (past and present) often turn to herding and fishing to supplement their income (and their diet, nowadays). The primary units of agriculture are the small tenant farms, or crofts, located in valleys or other low spots sheltered from the wind. Each croft has a small cluster of farm buildings surrounded by a bit of arable land (seldom more than a few acres), and each also shares a common sheep pasture (scattald) with others of its kind. The soil is poor except in certain areas, and the climate is not suited to a long growing season. Sheep and cattle do fairly well in most areas. The local cattle have been successfully crossbred with Aberdeen Angus for generations, yielding both milk and a light but good-quality beef. From the middle of the 20th century until the outbreak of the war, the islanders did good business breeding the tubby local ponies for sale as children's pets (the famed Shetland ponies). Nowadays they are put to their original purpose on the farm. Practically every crofter with access to the sea keeps a small boat to make occasional catches of the local whitefish. The economic centers of the Shetlands are the towns of Lerwick (the capital before the war) and Scalloway. Pier facilities for the fishing boats make these two towns the main harbors of the islands' fishing boats, and their close proximity to the islands' best agricultural lands supports a small crofter's market in each town.

CONDITIONS

The conventional war had little direct effect on the islands' populace. When the strategic nuclear exchange began, most of the nonnative population (primarily oil workers and their

Shetland Islands (United Kingdom)



Key



Village



Road



Rough

0 25

Kilometers

(Island names
are in all caps.)



Tolbert was in love with Marlena. The Debra on board the *Sunstrike* is really Marlena Banazak, who underwent plastic surgery to make her look like Debra.

Michael Delaney

Delaney has owned the far trader *Sunstrike* for 10 years and has barely managed to keep up with the mortgage payments. Twelve years ago, while serving as an engineer on a free trader, Delaney was tried for piracy and slave trading, but was eventually acquitted. Delaney is a good-natured starship captain who loves to swap stories at the captain's table. But he will become very angry if anyone mentions the piracy and slave trading charges—anyone who does should be ready for a fistfight.

Referee's Note: Delaney is innocent of the piracy and slave trading charges. He has many enemies within the merchant service, one of whom tried to frame him 12 years ago.

Engineer Owen Tolbert

Owen Tolbert has served as engineer on board the *Sunstrike* for eight years. Within the last year, he has been seen frequently with Debra McConnell, and the two of them are believed to be in love. He has also been seen frequently with Marlena Banazak, Debra's friend, during the last three months. Owen is

believed to be a member of the Eden Society, although he will deny it in public.

Referee's Note: Owen is an assistant group leader within the Eden Society. If he can catch one of the player characters alone, he may try to persuade him to join the Eden Society, if the PC seems receptive.

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

The real Debra McConnell committed suicide three days ago, after Owen Tolbert confessed that he was in love with Marlena. Marlena was upset and felt guilty about the death of her friend, but she saw the opportunity in the situation and quickly took action.

She bribed the police commissioner to keep the matter quiet (and out of the computer net). The next day, she made arrangements with Dr. Crawford to have plastic surgery to make her look like Debra. Dr. Crawford was more than happy to do the operation and keep Marlena's new identity a secret—for a price.

Meanwhile, Howard Travis tracked Marlena to the Gardega University Hospital and tapped into the surveillance camera network, getting a picture of Marlena's new appearance. After the operation, Crawford stumbled upon Travis calling the duke on his communicator in a deserted corridor, next to an electrical conductor box. He snuck up on Travis from behind and knocked him out with a blow to the head, then injected him with doramine. Used to treat patients suffering from the side effects of cold sleep, doramine is fatal in large doses, metabolizes quickly, and is difficult to detect. Crawford then stole the picture of Marlena, confiscated the film from the surveillance camera, and destroyed them both. Marlena does not know about the murder of Howard Travis.

Attempting to examine the body of Howard Travis without intervention from the duke is a Difficult task. If the characters run a toxicology test on Travis' body, they might find traces of doramine in the blood. Locating the drug is also a task.

To examine the body of Howard Travis (without ducal assistance):

Difficult, Administration modified by Liaison, 6 minutes.

To locate Doramine in Travis' blood: Difficult, Medical or Chemistry, 20 minutes.

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN

Marlena and Owen are planning to hijack the *Sunstrike* by reprogramming the jump coordinates to an Eden Society commune in the Mandril system, located one parsec away from the Zanagone system. Owen is a skilled navigator and plans to do the reprogramming while Captain Delaney is off the bridge. Both Owen and Delaney have keys to the ship's arms locker, which contains four rifles, four pistols, four daggers, and extra ammo. Delaney will not suspect Owen of plotting a hijacking because he is unaware of his involvement in the Eden Society.

If the characters get too close to the truth, Marlena will attempt a diversion—she will plant the pendant she was wearing in the picture of her and Debra on either Janice or Andrea.

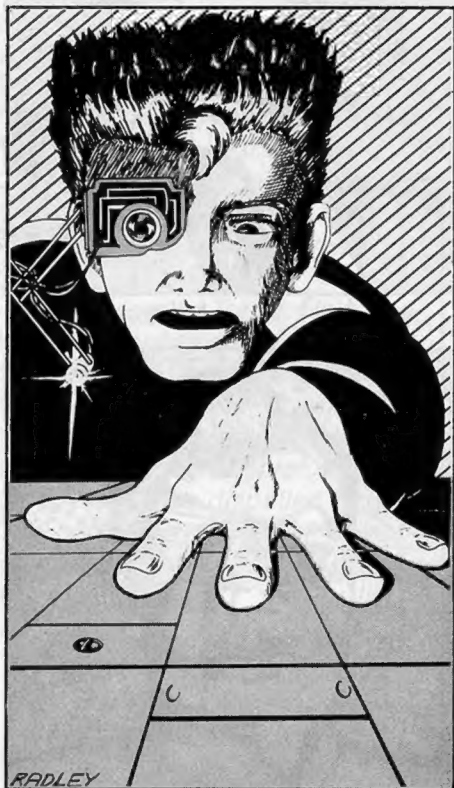
Once on Mandril, Marlena and Owen plan to join the commune there, keeping the other passengers on the planet as well. Owen would also like to check out some suspicions he has about a possible discrepancy in information the Eden Society directors have been giving out while proselytizing. Owen believes in the Eden Society's professed values and wants to put an end to any corruption by revealing the truth.

Getting either Owen or Marlena to give up the hijack attempt will be very difficult. The characters will need to physically restrain the two and/or convince them that the hijacking has no chance of succeeding.

To convince Owen and Marlena to give up the hijacking:

Difficult, Liaison, 4 minutes.

Referee's Note: If the current reaction level is either actively cooperative or totally cooperative, then reduce the difficulty to Routine. The characters must convince both NPCs to surrender in order to end the hijacking. If only one is convinced, he will continue resisting out of love for the other. In such a situation, subsequent attempts at gaining a surrender will be reduced one level further in difficulty to reflect the fact that the convinced NPC is also trying to talk his partner out of the hijacking.



Owen Tolbert

THE TRUTH ABOUT MANDRIL

The planet Mandril is universally listed as having a UWP of X868000-0 (no population), but Owen and Marlena believe they are going to a X868200-0 (low population) planet. Neither of these codes is correct—the UWP is actually X878200-0 (tainted atmosphere).

The 0 population factor of Mandril is erroneous—the Eden Society claims it has transported around 200 members to its commune on that planet through secret charters (and occasionally through hijacking).

But Owen suspects that several hundred more people have been transported there and that someone on the directorate is releasing deliberately low figures. He also thinks that individual has been embezzling funds. Only full-fledged group leaders are allowed to know the identities of the directorate, and it is not uncommon for the members of one Eden Society cell group not to know the lower-ranking members of other cell groups—making it possible for an unscrupulous directorate member to circulate false figures.

Owen does not know that an even more serious problem than the inaccurate population count is the atmospheric contamination on the planet. Mandril's atmosphere is tainted with hallucinogenic spores which, when inhaled, induce violent psychosis. People affected by the contamination undergo repeated violent psychotic episodes which may result in harm to themselves or others. The presence of this contaminate has resulted in a rapid downward spiral in the population of the planet. The spores are visible as a faint haze, which the referee may want to draw to the players' attention.

Owen and Marlena are not aware of the contamination of Mandril's atmosphere. In fact, no one within the Eden Society, except Dr. Crawford, knows about it. Crawford is using Mandril's false planetary profile to reap a huge profit, as all members of the Eden Society are required to sign over their possessions to the society prior to being transported to the Mandril commune. Needless to say, no one has ever returned to complain about getting a bum deal, and Crawford has altered the population figures and skimmed a large profit off the top.

If Owen and Marlena reach Mandril, they will go outside the ship, looking for their comrades. They will need to resist exposure to the spores, as will any unprotected PCs who follow them. Anyone leaving the ship must also be on their guard against the potentially dangerous inhabitants of the planet. Owen and Marlena will not think of using air filtration devices or taking weapons with them unless they are convinced of the contaminated nature of the atmosphere. Once contaminated by the spores, an individual must be treated within 24 hours by an antidote, or the effect can lead to permanent personality changes.

To resist exposure to the spores:
Difficult, Constitution.

Referee's Note: Checks must be made hourly. A vacc suit or filter mask will provide total protection against the spores.

To make an antidote to spore contamination:

Routine, Chemistry, 12 minutes.

Referee's Note: In order for the treatment to have an effect, the victim must be placed in a spore-free atmosphere.

AFTERMATH

The PCs should keep in mind that in order to collect the reward, they must deliver Marlena back to the duke at his palace or some other prearranged location. If Marlena dies or does not return, the duke will refuse to pay.

If the player characters succeed in delivering Marlena back to the duke, she will explain to him that she was only trying to keep her membership in the Eden Society from becoming public knowledge, and that she was helping Owen turn the society into a legitimate operation.

She will convince him if Owen and the PCs corroborate her story, or if they reveal Crawford's plot to lure unsuspecting members to a spore-tainted planet in order to steal their possessions. The duke will be happy to be reunited with his daughter and have her safe for now, no matter what future choices she makes.

And if they bring her back, the PCs will have fulfilled their part of the bargain and will receive the promised Cr100,000 reward. ♫

MEGATRAVELLER



Leyna Tirenthe has been, since the tender age of 14 standard, one of the brightest stars of stage and screen in the Imperium. In addition to her theatrical achievements, she was known, until recently, as the spokeswoman for Nuvonuev, a major manufacturer of cosmetics and body paints.

The daughter of a minor administrator on Terra, Leyna was "discovered" there by Adam Gordon, a theatrical agent well known for his business acumen. He met her during a brief stopover while she was working as a cleaning girl in the Travellers' Aid Society hostel.

Fascinated by her beauty and wit at so young an age, Gordon briefly researched her background, then approached Leyna and her family with his proposition. Adam Gordon became the young girl's legal guardian, but with the provision that he train her and represent her as an actress.

By the time Leyna had reached the age of 18, she was one of the highest paid performers in the Solomani Rim. Her beauty was not her only asset; her intelligence allowed her to grasp subtleties of technique that normally took years of experience to develop.

Exactly 44 weeks after her first starring production reached the Core, Leyna received an invitation to the palace of the emperor. Arriving on Capital aboard the cruiser *Imperial Reamor* (with Adam Gordon), Leyna was greeted by Strephon and accompanied him to the Royal Palace. During their stay on the Imperial Estate, Leyna Tirenthe, then 20, and Adam Gordon were married by the emperor.

The couple continued to live together on Capital. In the months that followed, Leyna grew even more famous, never losing her remarkable teenage sensuality. With her growing fame, however, evidence of her discontent began to surface. Rumors of infidelity ran rampant, and her liaisons with sev-

eral noted dignitaries came to light. On the eve of their second anniversary, apparently scandalized by Leyna's transgressions, Adam Gordon took his own life by leaping from his speeder at an altitude of 1000 meters.

Although Leyna was grief-stricken, she recovered quickly from her husband's death and again began circulating at social events, sometimes in the company of the emperor's son, Lucan.

On the evening of 242-1116, 110 days after the assassination of Strephon, Imperial police released news of the disappearance of Leyna Tirenthe. Investigating an alarm at her home, police found in her bedroom the bodies of three people: two unidentified men, both dead of stab wounds, and the body of Lieutenant Fel Ladnaussen, an Imperial guard, shot through the back of the head. His sword was still in his hand. Leyna's body was not found, nor has any evidence of her death surfaced since her disappearance that night.

Police believe that Leyna has been kidnapped, although no ransom demands have been made. Nuvonuev Cosmetics and her production company have offered a reward of Cr50,000 for proof of her whereabouts.

She has apparently been spotted on several worlds between Core sector and the Solomani Rim, where it is generally assumed she and her captors are heading. Palace sources say that Emperor Lucan is intensely

interested in Leyna's well-being and has alerted the entire Imperial intelligence network to find her and, if necessary, rescue her.

SETTING

Leyna Tirenthe is a racially pure Solomani with pale skin, red-blond hair, and gray eyes. She is 24 years old but looks like a girl still in her teens. She has an unusual habit of smoking cigarettes, sometimes difficult-to-find items made from Terran tobacco. For this encounter the players should be located at any one of the Travellers' Aid hostels in the Spinward Marches. During their stay, one or more of them will be approached by young woman in need of protection. Though

Leyna Tirenthe

Liaison-3, Bribery-1, Carousing-3, JOT-1

Actress/Noble

6A7BAD

Age: 24

Racially pure Solomani, red-blond hair,

and gray eyes. She is 24 years

old, she still looks like a young girl

who is usually

investiga-

re-



Christopher S. Willoughby

Leyna's face is famous, she is quite skilled in the use of cosmetics, and recognizing her is a task.

To recognize Leyna Tirenthe:

Difficult, Streetwise and Carousing, 1 day (uncertain).

This roll should be made every day for each character. If it is successful for any player, then the results should be revealed to the individual, *not* to the entire party. In any event, the players should be allowed to *slowly* unravel the mystery of her identity.

Leyna will claim to be a distant relative of Archduke Norris, on her way to see him on urgent business and in fear of kidnappers. She will produce well-forged papers (executed at Forgery-4) confirming her identity as Lady Elenais and will tell the characters that one failed attempt has already been made to abduct her. Leyna will use her youthful, innocent appearance and sensuality to persuade the players that she is in desperate need of their help. She will offer them Cr10,000 apiece and travelling expenses to escort her safely into the presence of the archduke.

MOTIVATION

Leyna is a Solomani "sleeper" agent; her actual age is 33 standard years. Recruited on Terra some years ago and provided with anagathics to maintain her teenage appearance, she was assigned to seduce the luminaries who frequent the Travellers' Aid Society hostels in the Sol subsector.

Her "discovery" by Adam Gordon was purely accidental and was initially looked upon by her superiors as a windfall, as her acting career allowed her to travel amid the upper strata of Imperial society. Gordon eventually came to realize who and what she was in the course of her time with him and forced her to marry him. However, his desires began to conflict with her ambitions, so she disposed of him without remorse.

Though Leyna amassed a great deal of valuable information during her time on Capital, the quality and amount of data she actually relayed to Solomani Intelligence was both substantially useless and very small. Eventually, believing that her public status would keep her superiors from acting against her, she refused to work as their agent any longer. The Solomani, unafraid of negative publicity in the Imperium, had other ideas.

When two Solomani agents caught her with the young lieutenant, he dispatched them with surprising swordsmanship. Realizing that her cover was compromised, Leyna promptly shot the lieutenant through the back of the head, gathered some valuables, and left her home, setting off her alarm in the process. She then boarded ship, not for the Solomani Rim or toward the Illeish war zone, but toward the one destination where her wealth of information would be of most value: Archduke Norris.

ADVENTURING WITH LEYNA

Leyna is utterly ruthless and will use any means possible to get to the archduke. She is aware that Lucan now knows of her identity as a Solomani agent, although he has failed to reveal it publicly, and she knows that Solomani Intelligence must by now have figured out her destination.

Lucan has not, in fact, committed his entire intelligence network to finding Leyna. Following the advice of several coun-

selsors, he has decided to be circumspect in his actions, lest the entire matter become public. The Solomani have few operatives in the Marches, so the players may expect to encounter only small groups of Imperial or Solomani agents.

Leyna is prepared to sacrifice any and all of the party members to arrive safely in Norris' care. If any member of the party guesses her identity, she will reveal herself and claim that Lucan himself wishes to assassinate her, stating that she can only reveal Lucan's reason for wanting her dead in the presence of Archduke Norris. If any character refuses to help her thereafter, she will attempt to turn the rest of the party against him.

Norris would indeed find her knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of several high-level officials useful. If the players succeed in escorting Leyna to his current location (which world should be determined by the referee), the archduke will see that they are paid the promised Cr10,000 apiece. If, however, he suspects that Leyna has revealed her identity to the characters, he will order them placed under surveillance. This could provide even more interesting adventures should the characters, for instance, attempt to change their identities to escape Imperial scrutiny.

REFEREEING LEYNA

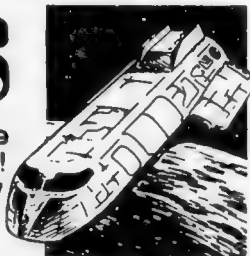
The most important aspect of this encounter is the revelation of Leyna Tirenthe's real villainy. In order for this adventure to work, the referee must play her as a highly sympathetic character. Let her ultimate actions reveal her true nature. Finally, though the extent of Leyna's knowledge and how much of it she reveals to the players is left to the referee to tailor to his campaign, here's one interesting idea: An inspection of Leyna's belongings will uncover an audio disk. On it is a conversation between Lucan and Leyna in which he exposes his prior knowledge of Dulinor's plot against Strephon. Note that a revelation of this nature could seriously affect the outcome of any campaign, but referees looking to add a wild card into the Rebellion should feel free to use it. ♪

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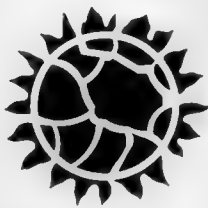


STARLANCE PUBLICATIONS
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"Tsu-Uerrzdezlurz—Ghae Sourz Aenrrarz!"
(To vanquish with honor—our Brotherhood of the Claw!)

—Popular Vargr battlecry.

Sourz: The Claws of Space



Philip Athans

The most notorious spacecraft ever designed is certainly the *Sourz*-class fighter, named for its characteristic hand-like hull design. The word *sourz*, translated from Arrghoun as *claw, hand or paw*, has become synonymous with Vargr fighter craft. In 1115, Imperial Naval Intelligence estimated that 93 percent of the operational fighters in the Vargr Extents were of the *Sourz* class. Popular as much for its uniquely intimidating structural design as for its versatility, speed, and firepower, no Vargr navy or corsair unit is without some number of *Sourz* fighters.

What holds true for all light fighter craft holds true for the *Sourz*. The value of small, fast, maneuverable fighters for support and defense of larger naval vessels has been proven in battle after battle for thousands of years. In the Vargr Extents, the role of fighter craft becomes more varied. Carried along on corsair ships of even less than 1000 tons, the *Sourz* is tremendously popular as a hard-hitting, hard-to-hit weapon. In planetary raids, few ground-support vehicles can even come close to its firepower and speed. Even the standard "no-frills" version is equipped with atmospheric weapons (usually twin VRF gauss guns), making quite obvious its function as a close-surface raider.

Though in many respects the *Sourz* is similar, if not identical, to other fighters in operation throughout known space, the tremendous popularity of this class and its long history have created around it a strange, nearly religious reverence that stretches across even the divisions the Vargr Extents can create. *Sourz* pilots throughout the Vargr Extents consider themselves part of a brotherhood—the *Sourz Aenrrarz*. A special reverence for their craft and the highly charismatic lure of life as a *Sourz* pilot seem to bring out not only the best pilots to man *Sourz* fighters, but the best *in* these pilots. Keeping this in mind, the *Sourz*-class fighter is, perhaps, the Vargr's most feared weapon.

HISTORY

The exact birthplace of the *Sourz*-class fighter is the stuff of legend. Most major governments in the Vargr Extents have, at one time or another, claimed responsibility for the design and construction of the first *Sourz* prototype. As it stands, the true birthplace of the *Sourz* is both unknown and hotly debated. The predominant feeling among *Sourz* pilots is that the design was a gift from the Ancients and was spread evenly throughout the Extents, allowing simultaneous development throughout Vargr space. Obviously, no hard evidence whatsoever backs up this unlikely assertion. It is agreed, however, that there must have been an original prototype at one time or another, and that it was most likely built to TL10 standards, even though the current version is at the forefront of TL15 ship design. All agree that if the prototype were actually discovered, it would be not only monetarily, but culturally and sociologically, the most valuable piece of engineering in the Vargr Extents. Of course (and most likely because of this), fakes abound.

Equally shadowy is the development of the *Sourz Aenrrarz*.

Mention of such a fraternity has been found in documents dating back to around -3000. It is possible that a very primitive form of *Sourz* fighter was used in the Colonial Rebellion of -3815 to -3790, when the Vargr race discovered jump technology, and several references to a military brotherhood can be found in records from this period. Historians tend to favor the idea that the *Sourz* Aenrrarz was based on a similar concept begun at this time and see the idea of quasireligious attachments of warriors to their weapons as a common cultural phenomenon that occurs not only among *Sourz* pilots.

The incident often cited as the first "official" documentation of the existence of the *Sourz* Aenrrarz took place during a local skirmish when the *Sourz* pilots on both sides suddenly turned on their motherships and destroyed all but two (they did need a ride home!), all the while screeching the now infamous: "*Tsu Uerrzdezlurz—Ghae Sourz Aenrrarz!*" through open communicators. This battlecry is still in use.

Vargr naval commanders are often suspicious of their *Sourz* pilots because the pilots tend to see their ships as more charismatic, and therefore more important, than their commanders. Though *Sourz* fighters engage each other time and time again, there is always a level of respect between opposing pilots. This respect goes deep enough that *Sourz* pilots will not deign to use tricks and dirty maneuvers on each other in even the most heated dogfights. (No pun intended.) A *Sourz* pilot will often take great pains to avoid his opponent's blind-spots and other vulnerabilities, preferring a straight-forward, head-to-head fight. As frustrating as this is for their commanders, *Sourz* on *Sourz* dogfights are ultimately rather long, graceful, and uncharacteristically civilized affairs.

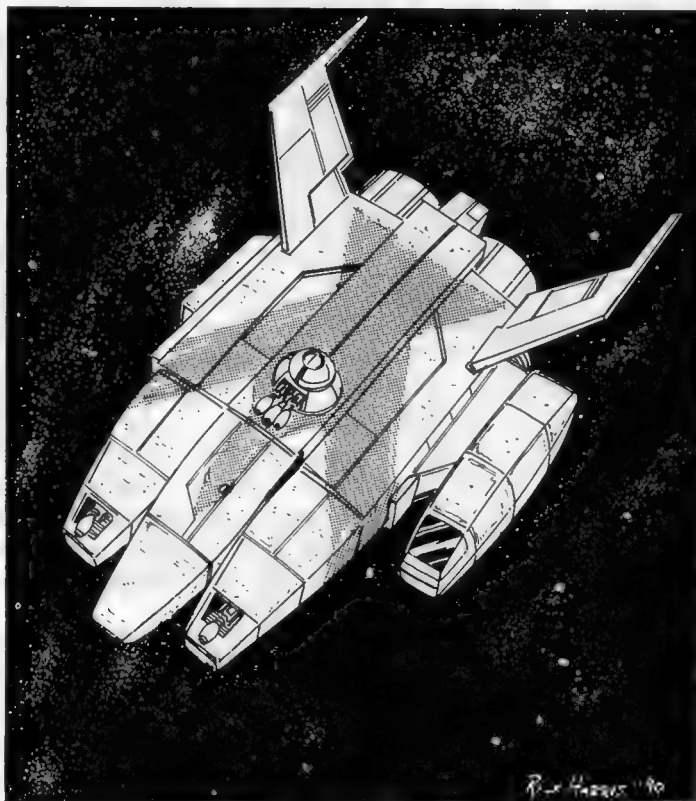
Sourz pilots often reject social contact outside their fighter group, and a pilot's closest relationship is frequently with his gunner. A *Sourz* pilot and his gunner are inseparable. If one is killed, the other almost always goes through a period of deep depression and may even make a radical career change rather than fly again with any other. Held in great esteem by their comrades and by the general Vargr population, *Sourz* pilots are usually haughty and unfriendly, but highly intelligent and sophisticated officers. Many Vargr naval vessels have very distinct, separate quarters for their *Sourz* flight crews, and entry into these sections is something most Vargr spacers have to be content with simply dreaming about.

DESIGN

The basic design, outlined to the right, is built to TL15 standards and includes the most common atmospheric weapon package (the twin VRF gauss guns) and the most common space weapons (a triple pulse-laser turret). Among the thousands of *Sourz* fighters in operation, any combination of weapons imaginable can be found. The basic design includes a 300,000-round gauss gun magazine with a volume of 90 kiloliters. In addition to weapons, individual customization of the standard *Sourz* design comes in many forms which are limited only by the imagination.

Sourz pilots always name their ships, and elaborate hull markings are a particular trademark of this class of vessel. Even in fleets that have strict requirements as to uniformity of hull markings, the *Sourz* squadrons are splashed with color. Some pilots even go so far as to have elaborate holographic images emblazoned across their ships.

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SOURZ

Craft ID: *Sourz* Fighter, Type VF, TL15, MCr28.3
Hull: 18/45, Disp=20, Config=2AF, Armor=40G
 Unloaded=80 tons, Loaded=404 tons
Power: 1/2, Fusion=1494 Mw, Duration=8/25
Loco: 3/6, Maneuver=6, NOE=190kph,
 Cruise=2835 kph, Top=3780 kph
 MaxAccel=6g, Agility=6

Commo: Radio=System
Sensors: ActiveEMS=Planetary,
 PassiveEMS=Interplanetary, Densitometer=LoPen/250m, Neutrino=10kw, Electromagnetic Masking, ActObjScan=Diff,
 ActObjPin=Diff, PasObjScan=Rout,
 PasObjPin=Rout, PasEngScan=Rout,
 PasEngPin=Rout

Off: PLaser-13=xx3
 Batt 1
 Bear 1

Type	Rounds	Pen/Attn	Dmg	Auto Tgts	Sig	Diff as
VRF Gauss Gun x2	300,000	21/4	10	4	Lo/R	FC 15

Def: DefDM=+9
Control: Computer=1/bisx3, Panel=holographic linkx167, Special: HeadsUp holox2
Environ: Basic env, basic ls, inertial comp
Accom: Crew=2 (pilot, gunner), Seats=adequatex2
Other: Cargo=6.76 kliters, Fuel=49 kliters,
 ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=Moderate Ω

TRAVELLER *News Service*

ANTARES/ANTARES (2421A762ADA-D)

Date: 012-1120

¶ "Based on an analysis of the neutrino emissions and the increase in pulsation rate of the star Antares, we believe the chance of Antares going supernova within the next 250 years is about 55 percent," stated Dr. Shen Gakivin of the Uucha Astronomical Observatory, located in the red giant's inner belt. "Now that the Circumsolar Neutrino Sensor Network is on-line, we have been able to refine our data tenfold over our previous work."

¶ Cashin Cam-Cinn, science advisor to Archduke Brzk, replied to the UAO announcement, saying, "We've heard these kind of negative predictions for decades on end from the Uucha Station. Such grandiose predictions seem designed more to justify increased spending for the station than to conclude anything useful."

ILELISH/ARRELI (2707 B877831-8)

Date: 023-1120

¶ At the Federation Natural History Conference, held at Gitaaz Center in Concarraffi, Dr. Javin Stark presented the findings from his recent archaeological digs on Ilelish. The centerpiece of the presentation was a fossilized Droyne skull, which he estimated to be about 300,000 years old.

¶ "This finding obviously presents us with far more questions than answers regarding the history of the world (Ilelish)," Stark stated. "The two main questions are, 'How did Droyne get to Ilelish,' and 'Why did they disappear?' Considering that the date of this skull fits with our estimates of when the Suerrat were presumably transplanted to Ilelish by the Ancients, it seems reasonable to assume that a sample of Droyne were brought to Ilelish as well."

¶ "As to why they disappeared—it could be that they were exterminated while competing with the proto-Suerrat for resources after the Ancients' Final War. An alternate theory proposes that the Ancients may simply have discontinued use of Droyne on this world."

¶ "Unfortunately, we simply don't have enough facts to support any theory conclusively at this time. Our hope of understanding this find lies in locating more evidence and scrutinizing our data to make sure the answer is not before us and simply hiding in the cracks."

CAPITAL/CORE (2118A586A98-F)

Date: 027-1120

¶ The unveiling ceremony for *The Enemy Of Dreams*, a special sculpture commissioned by Emperor Lucan, took place today. The piece has received a lot of attention even before it was publicly presented since it was created by the prominent sculptor Trow Shadii-Eriskany, noted for her controversial works portraying anti-Imperial themes.

¶ The sculpture presents a menacing image of Dulinor with a pistol in one hand, grabbing the dying Emperor Strephon by the collar in the other. *The Enemy of Dreams* is situated in the center of the Imperial Park. Though the subject is one every Imperial citizen knows well, the grotesque style of the statue has evoked strong emotion, both pro- and anti-Imperial.

¶ Shadii-Eriskany was noticeably absent from the unveiling. Representatives of the throne report that she left shortly after completing the sculpture to join her husband, who has been vacationing in a nearby system.

VLAND/VLAND (1717A967A9A-F)

Date: 032-1120

¶ The Vilani Ministry of Technology today announced that it had issued to the major megacorporations of the empire a Request for Proposal (RFP) to reimplement the traditional technological patent system of the First Imperium.

¶ Gashina Enerish, spokesperson for the ministry, said, "The control of technology by the First Imperium was one reason why it was able to endure for more than 5000 years. The shadow emperor and the minister of technology are united in their belief that the reimplementation of the traditional patent system will be an important part of this empire's foundation."

TAURI/VLAND (1817A130998-E)

Date: 034-1120

¶ Makhidkarun, Sharurshid, and Naasirka held a joint news conference today to discuss their support for the traditional system. They also announced a technology-sharing agreement and cross-licensing pact which would allow each to use the technology developed by the others under the traditional system.

¶ The holding company, to be jointly owned by the three megacorporations, would be administered from a new corporate headquarters on Tauri. The announcement concluded with a dramatic ritual announcement of the name selected for the new organization—Aarmikep. The name is a now-archaic Vilani word for patent law.

CAPITAL/CORE (2118AS86A98-F)

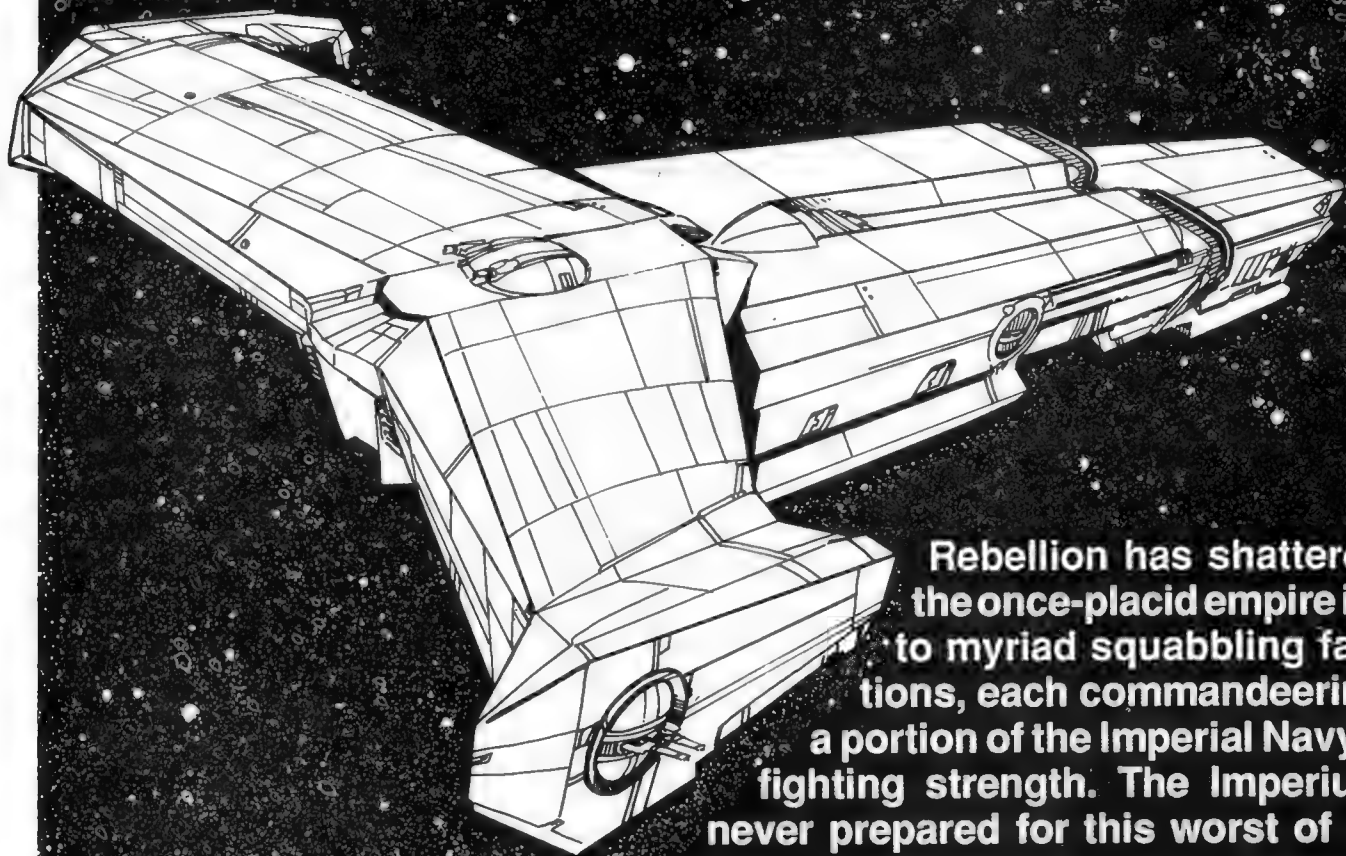
Date: 054-1120

¶ The pirate video source with broadcast stations in the Sylean Worlds today added programming in support of Brzk of Antares as the only true contender for emperor of the Third Imperium. Until today, the video programming of the stations (although unlicensed) was tolerated because of its nonpolitical content. With the addition of political (and anti-Lucan) programming, local defense forces have been directed to shut the stations down. Ω

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Griszoung

Tad Ringo

Vargr Merchant Captain/Owner
5A6C9C
Age 46
7 terms
Cr1,000,000

Skills: Handgun-3, Streetwise-3, Pilot-3, Ship Tactics-2, Bribery-2, Carousing-2, Navigation-2, Recruiting-2, Trader-1, Vacc Suit-1, Computer-0, Grav Vehicle-0.

Possessions: Ship, gauss pistol, body pistol.

Homeworld: Starport B, Medium Size, Standard Atmosphere, Wet, High Population, Low Law, Average Stellar.

Vargr Extents. He is also familiar with some of the Aslan traders in the Spinward Marches, as well as brokers who deal in Aslan goods. Griszoung has had a great deal of success buying and selling goods between the alien races in the Marches.

With the advent of the Fifth Frontier War, Griszoung's speculative trade contacts led him to jobs of a more suspect nature, and Griszoung made quite a name for himself as a smuggler and blockade runner. During that time he improved his skill as a pilot, becoming quite accomplished in combat situations. He

it didn't compare to what he had made during the war. Griszoung returned to smuggling when the opportunity presented itself, but such opportunities were few and far between. Now, however, with the Spinward Marches cut off from the rest of the Imperium by Vargr corsairs in Corridor Sector and Aslan *ihatei* fleets seeking the developed worlds of the Marches for their own conquest, demands for Griszoung's talents are once again plentiful.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Vargr are a gregarious race, and Griszoung is no exception. He is a very sociable character who likes to frequent startowns and the Vargr quarter at ports of call. These dangerous areas, which are renowned for their violence and unsavory subcultures, are where Griszoung feels most at home.

Griszoung has been in contact with humans for most of his life and has learned to deal with them. His years in the Imperium and its fringes have seen Griszoung overcome his original feelings of uneasiness with humans, and he now finds their stability and loyalty advantageous in many situations—so much so, in fact, that Griszoung prefers to operate his free trader with a racially mixed crew.

Griszoung is very popular with his Vargr crewmembers as well. He always has some business venture in the works, whether it's turning a profit through speculative trade, or smuggling cargo and/or passengers for a chance at even greater profits. This constant activity, combined with his repeated successes, has been his key in attaining his high Charisma. With it has come the respect and loyalty of his crew.

OUTWORLD TRADER

Griszoung's ship is a modified 400-ton Type R merchant, the *Outworld Trader*. (Many people have joked that *Outworld Traitor* might be a more appropriate name—but not in front of Griszoung.) The *Outworld Trader* was originally capable of only jump-1 and 1-G acceleration, but Griszoung has been able to install bigger and better



Griszoung is a free trader operating along the Imperial frontier in the Spinward Marches. Regular cargoes have not always been easy to come by for him over the years, but with perseverance he has been able to make money through speculative trade. Griszoung has numerous contacts at starports throughout the region, including locations in the Darrian Confederation, the Sword Worlds, Zhodani territory, and the

also learned when some Imperial credentials or other choice items would get authorities to look the other way. When that didn't work, Griszoung could always shoot his way out of danger; he wasn't afraid to let his gauss pistol talk for him.

After the war, Griszoung returned to more standard merchant practices but kept a low profile to avoid Imperial authorities who might remember his wartime activities. While he turned a profit,

drives over the years. The ship is now capable of jump-2 and 5-G acceleration. The *Trader* is intended to appear to still be a normal Type R merchant, so normally the ship will maneuver at 1-G and stick to jump-1. The improved drives are only used at peak when necessary. Gris-zoung has also installed pop turrets containing triple missile launchers in the two hardpoints commonly left unarmed on this type of ship. Additionally, the computer has been upgraded to a model 5, and "surplus" military sensors have added electromagnetic masking and jamming capabilities. All of this has resulted in less-than-standard fuel duration for the power plant and only 50 tons of cargo space. The limited space would not fill the needs of the average merchant, but it fits the needs of a smug-

address the patrons, growling, "Alright, I need a gunner!" or some other such phrase, and come away with someone in minutes. These recruits have all been good at their jobs and have become valued members of the crew.

Although Griszoung's recruiting style may seem haphazard, he has put a good deal of thought into the matter. His years of experience as a merchant, plus his Streetwise and Carousing skills, enable him to spot the kind of character he's looking for. This may be a grizzled, reliable veteran or a young, impressionable kid with an appetite for adventure. In either case, Griszoung knows the best way for a recruit to get in well with an established crew is to perform his duties impressively. Toward this end, Griszoung will give the recruit some tips

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PSYCHOLOGY

When Griszoung was 18 years old, he talked his way into a job in a tramp freighter which worked the trading outposts on the Imperium-Vargr Extents border. The captain of the ship took the young, impressionable Griszoung under his wing, and Griszoung responded by serving him faithfully. Over the years Griszoung handled every responsibility thrown his way and finally rose to the position of first officer.

Corsairs and pirates are always a problem on the frontier, but Griszoung's captain was experienced enough to avoid them most of the time. However, on a run through a lightly patrolled system, the ship was forced to undergo a wilderness refueling at a gas giant. A Vargr corsair ambushed it. Griszoung's captain gave the corsair a tough fight, but after repeated hits on the engineering section, the tramp freighter could not maneuver. A bloody boarding action ensued. The pirates were repelled, but the merchant captain who had taught Griszoung everything he knew died in the battle.

Griszoung inherited control of the ship, and the crew rallied behind him. Command came naturally to the charismatic Vargr, but he never forgot his former captain. As a result of that early encounter, Griszoung harbors an extreme hatred of pirates and corsairs, and will go out of his way to seek revenge against any who cross his path.

Despite turning to smuggling and blockade running, Griszoung still fancies himself a normal merchant. Because of his lack of respect for formal or centralized authority (a common trait among Vargr), he fails to comprehend his own lawless nature. Obviously he realizes smuggling is illegal, but he does not see how it is "wrong" and does not respect the unseen governments that enforce the laws he breaks. Griszoung does perceive piracy to be "wrong," as he has seen firsthand the terrible atrocities committed by pirates and corsairs. In his mind there is no comparison be-

(Continued on page 28)

OUTWORLD TRADER

NONSTANDARD TYPE-R MERCHANT

Craft ID:

Hull:

Power:

Loco:

Commo:

Sensors:

Off:

Def:

Control:

Accom:

Other:

Nonstandard Subsidized Merchant, Type NR, TL15, MCr229,057

360/900, Disp=400, Config=1SL, Armor=40G, Unloaded=4361 tons, Loaded=5183 tons

20/40, Fusion=5332Mw, Duration=20/60

51/102, Maneuver=5, 11/22, Jump=2, NOE=190kph, Cruise=750kph, Top=1000kph, Agility=0

Radio=System

Electromagnetic Masking, Passive EMS=Interstellar, Active EMS=Far Orbit, EMS Jammer=Far Orbit, Densitometer=HighPen/1km, Neutrino=10kw, ActObjScan=Rout, ActObjPin=Rout, PasObjScan=Rout, PasObjPin=Rout, PasEngScan=Simp, PasEngPin=Rout

Missiles=x03

Batt 2

Bear 2

Beam Laser=x03

Batt 2

Bear 2

DefDM=+6

Computer=5x3, Panel=holodynamic linkx465, Special=HeadsUpx3, Environ=basic env, basic ls, extend ls, grav plates, inertial comp

Crew=9 (bridge=2, engineer=3, gunnery=4), Staterooms=8, Low-Berth=7, Subcraft=launch

Cargo=675 kliters, Fuel=2094 kliters, Purification Plant, Scoops, ObjSize=Average, EMLevel=Faint, Variable transponder

gler who determines the price of a cargo not by its volume, but by the number of patrols he must get it past.

RECRUITING

The crewmembers of the *Outworld Trader* tell many stories about their captain and his exploits in recruiting new crewmembers. On several occasions Griszoung has run into a starport bar and leaped onto a table or bar stool to

of the trade, keep close tabs on him, and manipulate situations to the advantage of the recruit. For example, with a new gunner on board, Griszoung might maneuver the ship during a battle against a pirate corsair to give the new gunner the best shot possible. In *Mega-Traveller* game terms, this type of aid is best simulated by Griszoung using his Ship Tactics skill to modify any such crucial tasks new recruits attempt.



Michelle Sturgeon, Managing Editor



Loren K. Wiseman, Associate Editor



Julia Martin, Associate Editor

Challenge Names New Staff

This issue of **Challenge** heralds a new staff setup. Michelle Sturgeon now combines her duties as art director with those of managing editor. Former managing editor Loren K. Wiseman has stepped down, but will keep his finger on the pulse of the magazine as associate editor. Rounding out the staff is former reviews editor Julia Martin, joining Loren as associate editor.

The new staff plans some exciting changes for the magazine. In addition to your GDW favorites—**Twilight: 2000**,

MegaTraveller, **Space: 1889**, and **2300 AD**—you'll see continued coverage of *Warhammer*, *BattleTech*, *Renegade Legion*, *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, and much more!

With six issues a year, and now 96 pages per issue, **Challenge** is and will continue to be *the* magazine of science-fiction gaming.

Keep an eye out for some new features, writers and artists. And be sure to use the feedback form to write in and let the new staff know what you think. Ω

(Continued from page 27)

tween what he does (smuggling) and the activities pirates engage in. Anyone who confronts Griszoung about his lawlessness, suggesting that he's no better than a pirate or that his merchant activities are just a cover for corsair operations, will feel his wrath. Griszoung may attempt to force a public apology, seek to damage his accuser's reputation, or in extreme cases, riddle him full of holes with a burst from a gauss pistol!

ADVENTURES

Griszoung is a colorful character players can encounter in any number of ways. The shattered Imperium, with its many factions, provides the perfect setting for Griszoung's operations. As a patron, Griszoung may be seeking to hire the PCs as new crewmembers. His is a high-risk business, and casualties

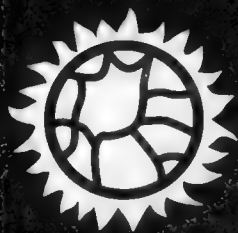
often need to be replaced. Accepting a job from Griszoung would give the PCs a chance to tangle with the authorities of various factions as they gain knowledge of the Rebellion.

Perhaps the PCs will hire Griszoung to get them past the authorities. (Everyone knows how much trouble PCs can get themselves into!) Griszoung has the know-how and the means (a ship) to help the PCs out of a dilemma. However, their association with Griszoung will certainly get them into more trouble, even if they don't do anything but use his services as an escape route. Later on the players may have someone chasing them without their understanding why, due to their brief sojourn in the *Outworld Trader*.

Representatives of the archduke of Deneb may hire the PCs to catch the renegade Griszoung. Archduke Norris

believes catching the charismatic Griszoung would serve as a warning to other lawless Vargr in the area. The PCs would have to track him from port to port and would certainly get into a battle with him before they could bring him in.

Or maybe the PCs are pirates or privateers who tangle with Griszoung. The PCs will bite off more than they can chew when they encounter this vengeful merchant. And once they've crossed Griszoung, he's not going to let them get away without paying a price. This situation could be a great starting point for introducing Griszoung as a recurring nemesis to the PCs. Whenever the referee wants an action-oriented adventure segment or a space combat, Griszoung can catch up to the PCs and go after them. Thus, Griszoung can help a referee tie a series of adventures together into an exciting campaign. Ω



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Errata & Corrigenda

Heavy Weapons Guide

Loren K. Wiseman

The division of antitank missiles, rockets, and grenade launchers into categories in **Heavy Weapons Guide (Twilight: 2000)** creates a potential for confusion between guided and unguided projectiles. The following are guided and use the antitank missile rule on page 24 of the **Twilight: 2000 Play Manual**: M47 Dragon, TOW, ITOW, TOW- II, Tank Breaker, RBS-56 BILL, AT-3, AT-5, MILAN, HOT, ACCP.

The following (and all other weapons dealt with in **Heavy Weapons Guide**) are unguided and do not use the antitank missile rule: M12 SMAW, RPG-22, RPG-7, RPG-27, Armburst, M3 Carl Gustav, M20A1 Bazooka, M72 LAW, LAW-80, AT-4, RPG-75, APILAS, ERYX, LRAC 89, M79 (Jugoslav), PzF-11-1, M202, RPG-16, B-300, 122mm Free Rocket.

Temple of the Beastmen

The winning the game card was left out of some of the first copies to be shipped of **Temple of the Beastmen (Space: 1889)**. The card (part no. CC-1892/R2) reads as follows:

Once the last card has been drawn from the deck, characters begin to exit the kraag. (They need not take the most direct route, and they can pause to fight beastmen and pick up items remaining on the board.) Players whose pawns exit early may continue to play hold cards from their hands during their turns, as long as there is at least one pawn remaining on the board.

Each counter a character brings out of the kraag is worth one victory point, unless it states that it is worth more. As well, each player whose pawn exits the kraag accrues one victory point per turn until the last pawn exits. (An easy way to keep track of this is to have each player whose pawn has exited draw one one-point counter, such as a slave, during each of his turns until the last pawn exits.) To these victory points are added the points for a character's primary goal, if it was achieved.

After the last pawn exits the kraag, all players calculate their victory points, and the person with the highest total wins. Players with equal scores tie.

Sky Galleons of Mars

Frank Chadwick

The following errata, clarifications and variants are based on gamer feedback and suggestions we have received since publication of **Sky Galleons of Mars (Space: 1889)**. Intended to be a consolidation of all errata and changes published to date, this article also includes new modifications to the game. The article is divided into three parts: Ship Design, Ship Combat, and Variants. The first two sections should be considered official, while the third is optional.

SHIP DESIGN

Official modifications to **Sky Galleons of Mars** are as follows.

Balanced Armament: Due to stability requirements on the vessel, all armament must be balanced (by weight) on each side. That is, if 40 tons of weapons are mounted on the port side, 40 tons must also be mounted on the starboard side.

Allowed Numbers of Marines: Due to limitations on deck size, a maximum of five marines may be carried per hull size. Any troops in addition to this are carried as passengers belowdeck and may not participate in combat.

SHIP COMBAT

Official modifications to **Sky Galleons of Mars** are as follows.

Collisions: A ship may maneuver to avoid a collision in the same manner in which it maneuvers to avoid a ram. If the ship has already moved for this turn, the movement expended to avoid the collision is subtracted from its next turn's allowance.

Boarding Actions: No ship may fire at another ship which has a friendly boarding party on it.

Damage: When rolling to recover from a trim critical hit, the ship recovers if the player rolls higher than the damage value of the damage—or, if the damage value is 6 or more, if he rolls a 6. The favorable modification due to hull size is made to the die roll, not the damage value. For example, a ship with a hull value of 5 which suffers a trim critical with a damage value of 7 recovers on a roll of 5 or 6, not just a 6.

Small Arms Fire: When firing at armored ships, add the armor value of the ship to the small arms save number. A 6, however, never saves, regardless of the armor value of the ship. Armor also does not protect boarding parties.

Throckmorton Conveyors: A maximum of one Throckmorton conveyor may take off from a ship per hull size number per turn.

Tether Mines: If a ship has more than one tether mine raised, make only one roll for hits; if one mine hits, all mines detonate. This counts as a single hit, but the damage values of all the mines are added together. If tether mines are released, roll separately for each mine to see if it hits.

Drogue Torpedoes: If a ship has more than one drogue torpedo deployed, make only one roll for hits; if one hits, all the torpedoes deployed detonate. This counts as a single hit, but the damage values of all the torpedoes are added together. A drogue torpedo may be released and used as a bomb (see below). When using a drogue torpedo as a bomb, the same procedure is followed as when determining a bomb hit, but one hit is scored with any positive number. The drogue retains its own penetration and damage values.

Bomb Racks: Bombs are carried in racks and dropped on targets below the vessel. Normally these will consist of fortresses, cities, ships at anchor, or aerial vessels on the

ground. Bombs may be dropped, however, on aerial or naval vessels either moving or stationary. Bombs are dropped during movement in the same manner as Martian liquid fire; roll one die per rack of bombs and subtract the difference in altitude between the ship and its target. If the target is moving, subtract its current movement (the number of movement points most recently expended) as well. The result is the number of bomb hits scored. Each bomb hit has a penetration of 1 and a damage value of 2.

Spike Droppers: Invented by Martians but soon copied by European powers, the spike dropper is little more than a hopper full of short, metal, finned spikes or darts. Attacks with spike droppers are made in exactly the same way as liquid fire racks, with the one exception that all hits scored are crew casualties.

Each hopper of spikes may be used only once per game. Once dropped, the hopper is expended and may not be reloaded during the game. No crewmembers need to man the spike dropper; its release controls are on the bridge. Each spike dropper is represented on the ship status sheet by a rectangle containing several spikes.

If spike droppers are located on a ship, count them as guns for hit location rolls.

VARIANTS (OPTIONAL)

A number of players have commented that with sequential movement there is little emphasis in the game on maneuvering. Both players can do pretty much whatever they like based on absolute knowledge of their opponents' position. I think there is some truth to this charge. The correction commonly suggested is to use plotted simultaneous movement, as in games such as Avalon Hill's *Wooden Ships and Iron Men*, or Yaquinto's *Ironclads*. There are difficulties with this system, however.

First, with different altitudes—as well as changes in course and speed—available, deliberate ramming becomes virtually impossible.

Second, captains usually had some ability to respond to an enemy's maneuver, but in plotted movement it becomes almost entirely a guessing game, with ships sometimes steaming off in entirely different directions.

The variant which is presented below may provide a compromise.

Plotted Movement: Both players must plot half their movement (in terms of movement points) in the Initiative Phase of each turn, at the same time that crew assignments are changed. A player may plot less than half his total movement allowance, but this will reduce his total allowed movement for the turn.

After initiative is determined, both players move their vessels exactly as plotted at the start of the turn. Play now proceeds normally, except that each player may not expend more movement points in his own Movement Phase than he did in the plotted portion of his move.

COACC

Terry McInnes

The following information addresses errors and omissions in **COACC (MegaTraveller)**.

Page 9: The drawing shown is that of the *Akron* (TL5) nonrigid airship described on page 87. The drawing on page 87 is that of the *Rio de Janeiro*-class luxury passenger dirigible, which was not included in **COACC**.

Page 11: For the *Ypres* (TL5) primitive fighter, the correct technology level is TL5, not 4. The correct endurance is 3.3 hours, not 8 hours.

Page 17: The *Laramie* TL7 jet fighter has 200-kilogram missile bays. Each may hold one semiactive radar homing missile or active radar homing missile. *Note:* Maximum external stores for this aircraft are 9.45 tons.

Page 19: The *Reno* interceptor has 200-kilogram missile bays. Each may hold one semiactive radar homing missile or active radar homing missile.

Page 21: The *Abilene* (TL8) jet fighter has 200-kilogram missile bays. Each may hold one semiactive radar homing missile or active radar homing missile.

Page 23: The *Daytona*-class orbital fighter/interceptor is TL10, not TL9.

Page 25: For the *Nuremburg*-class attack aircraft, maximum external stores=1500 kilograms (reduced from 2000 kilograms).

Page 29: Weapons Mounts Addition: Purpose-built attack aircraft which do not incorporate a swept-back wing design may have more than two outboard hardpoints on each wing. All hardpoints may carry weapons as long as the total external weapons load does not exceed the limits stated in the rules.

Page 29: Weapons Mounts Amplification: The rules state aircraft *normally* have no more than one fuselage hardpoint. This does not rule out additional fuselage hardpoints such as those found on the *Mexico City* bomber design.

Page 31: Weight Addition: A purpose-built attack aircraft may carry up to 40 percent of its clean weight as external stores, and its gross takeoff weight may be 140 percent of its clean weight.

Page 33: Add the table below to the Weapon Mounts Table.

Page 37: The *Port Stanley* (TL8) VTOL medium attack aircraft may carry either a 2000-liter drop tank beneath its fuselage or two 1500-liter drop tanks on its inboard underwing hardpoints, not both.

Page 49: For the *Seattle* (TL8) all-weather heavy attack aircraft, delete the fuselage hardpoint. This aircraft correctly has only the four inboard wing hardpoints and a maximum external load of six tons.

Page 50: Semiactive Radar Homing Missiles: The task "to radar illuminate target aircraft" becomes Formidable if the range is greater than 60 squares at launch. If lock is maintained and the range to

target is reduced to below 60 squares in subsequent combat rounds, the task reverts to Difficult.

WEAPON MOUNTS TABLE

Code	TL	Type	Drag	Weight	Capacity	Price
Pre-Stellar	7	Missile bay	(1)	.20	1 200kg air-to-air missile	Cr3500

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Page 53: For the *Mexico City* (TL9) bomber, the correct name for this class is *New York City*. The *Mexico City* designation belongs to a class of heavy freighter described later in COACC.

Page 55: Semiactive Radar Homing Missiles: The task "to radar illuminate target aircraft" becomes Formidable if the range is greater than 60 squares at launch. If lock is maintained and the range to target is reduced to below 60 squares in subsequent combat rounds, the task reverts to Difficult.

Page 59: The release points table should read as follows:

DIVE BOMBING RELEASE POINTS

Range	Altitude (Meters)	DM
0	500-1500	+2
1	1500-3000	0
2	3000-4500	-1

Units: Range: Squares from target square.

Page 59: Task Correction: "To hit designated target area with bombing attack."

Referee: DM-1 if bombing with high-drag bombs.

Page 64: Correct the Dive Bombing Release Points Table as shown above.

Page 67: The fuel tanks section of the text should read, "These 500-, 1500-, and 2000-liter external tanks...."

Page 68: Air-to-Air Missiles Correction: SARH and ARHM should read as 6/90 rather than 6/60.

Page 68: Add this line to the Air-to-Air Missiles Table.

AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES

TL	Type	Weight	Range		Speed	Dam.	Cost
			Min/Max				
TL8	Heavy ARHM	1000	10/300		15	44	Cr10,000

Note: Aircraft intending to fire the heavy ARHM must be equipped with regional radar.

Page 69: Add the Gun Weights Table. Weights are in kilograms. Machinegun belts hold 100 rounds; autocannon belts hold 50 rounds. Multibarrel autocannon are fed from drum-like ammunition hoppers. These hoppers typically hold between 500 and 1500 rounds, depending on the available carrying capacity of the aircraft design.

GUN WEIGHTS

Weapon	Weight per Gun	Weight per Belt	Weight per Round
Medium machinegun	9.5	2.5	—
Light machinegun	5.5	2.5	—
Heavy machinegun	15	10	—
20mm autocannon	200	20	.4
20mm 3-barreled autocannon	220	—	.4
20mm 6-barreled autocannon	310	—	.4
30mm autocannon	240	40	.8
30mm 6-barreled autocannon	370	—	.8

Page 87: The airship pictured in the illustration is the *Rio de Janeiro* rigid dirigible.

The *Akron* airship is pictured on page 9. The *Rio de Janeiro* class specifications are as follows.

(Continued on page 33)

CHALLENGE *Mini Epic*



(Continued from page 32)

RIO DE JANEIRO (TL5) RIGID AIRSHIP

- CraftID:** Rigid Airship TL5, MCr16.15
Hull: 13333/33333, Disp=4000, Volume=200,000 cubic meters. Envelope Weight=176 tons, Usable Lift=66 tons, Airframe=Simple. Power: 10x4/10 Internal Combustion, .25 Mw, Endurance=103 hours, 20 minutes
Loco: Basic Propeller (Diesel), Thrust=20 tons, Cruise=90, Top=120, Agility=0
Commo: Radio, Continentalx1
Control: Simple
Accom: Crew=20 (3 pilots, 3 copilots, 3 navigators, 3 engineers, 6 flight engineering technicians, 3 stewards, 1 cook) in 6 double and 3 quadruple staterooms, 30 passengers in 15 double staterooms. *Note:* Crew listed above is sufficient to staff ship with three watches every 24 hours. Flights of less than 12 hours would only require one-third the number of flight crew, but the number of stewards would remain the same.
Other: Cargo=11 tons, Fuel=15,500 liters

It carries passengers in luxury on voyages up to 9000 kilometers across TL5 worlds. Until the introduction of transcontinental airliners at TL6, these and similar airships are the only air transportation between continents of many worlds.

Page 94: The Assignments Table does not agree with the Assignment Resolution Table. Change Assignments Table to:

ASSIGNMENTS

Die	Atmosphere/Orbit	Ground
2	Strike	Missiles/air defense/hospital
3	Strike	Missiles/air defense/hospital
4	Superiority	Training
5	Transport/support	Support/base//air police/security//base
6	Training	Support/base//air police/security//base
7	Transport/support	Training
8	Training	Support/base//air police/security//base
9	Strike	Training
10	Superiority	Missiles/air defense/hospital
11	Special assignment	Special assignment
12	Special assignment	Special assignment Ω

Secrets of the Ancients

Lester W. Smith

IT HAPPENS TO ALL referees at one time or another. You prepare a group of baddies to attack your player characters, taking great care to provide the PCs with a challenge but not to overwhelm them. Then, during actual play of the adventure, your players suddenly prove unable to make a decent combat roll, and it seems that the villains will overwhelm the PCs. Suddenly, you are faced with a dilemma: Do you fudge your die rolls to make the NPCs as inept as the PCs, or do you let the PCs be defeated? If you choose the former, the players may begin to feel that their characters are never really threatened; but if you choose the latter, you somehow have to provide the PCs with an opportunity to turn the tables and escape at a later time.

That is where the following adventure can be of use. It depends upon the PCs being led as captives into a mysterious danger they might otherwise have avoided, then it provides them with an opportunity to escape both their captors and the jaws of a trap set long ago by the ancient canal builders of Mars.

OUR STORY THUS FAR

WHILE ADVENTURING on Mars, somehow the player characters have been captured by a band of cutthroats and clapped in irons, soon to be sold into

slavery in some undisclosed hell pit. To ensure that they do not attempt a premature break for freedom, the referee has the cutthroat band meet up with enough compatriots to guarantee that the PCs are outnumbered by at least three to one. It does not matter if the villains are travelling by land or by air: What matters is that they are traversing some seldom travelled tract of land, someplace the PCs have never been to.

AN ANCIENT ENIGMA

WHILE FOLLOWING the course of a dead canal (or while flying overhead in a sky galleon), the villains, with the PCs in tow, come across a fair-sized lake in the middle of nowhere. What is even more remarkable is that the lake rests near the edge of the top of a small cliff. Closer inspection reveals an ancient pumping station standing just between the border of the lake and the edge of the cliff. The villains decide to halt their travel long enough to inspect the pumping station, hoping to discover some priceless ancient devices. They take the PCs along in order to keep a close eye on them.

If the referee desires, a steppe Martian village or two may be located on the lake's borders. The villains will most likely seek to avoid contact with villagers unless supplies are low, but the villagers might consider the pumping

station to be a shrine—making them very protective of it (such details are left to the referee's discretion).

THE PUMPING STATION

FROM THE LOOKS of its outer shell, the ancient pumping station is in surprisingly good repair. Only one floor is visible above ground (the other two are subterranean—or subarean, to be precise), and the only apparent entrance is blocked by a door of some strange metal alloy. No lock is evident, but the door fails to open when pulled or pushed. In the end, the villains are forced to chisel the stone wall around the door in order to insert pry bars. Chains are attached to the pry bars, and the player characters form into teams to pull on those chains. Eventually, after much sweating and groaning on the PCs' part, the ancient latch gives way, and the door comes crashing open.

Immediately inside, a hallway stretches toward the center of the building. Another door in the eastern wall of the hallway has a lock in it. While one of the villains kneels to begin working at opening it, the player characters are ushered on down the hall into the large room at its end.

This room was once the station's central meeting room. It contains two long metal tables in its center, a counter along the west wall, and what looks to

be some sort of oven unit (still operable) near the door in its southwest wall. As well, in the northeast corner of the room lies an entrance to a staircase leading downward.

Once the PCs are herded to the room's northwest corner and placed under guard, another of their captors checks the door in the southwest wall. It opens fairly easily, its hinges shedding flakes of rust, and reveals a barracks-style sleeping room with the metal frames of bunks and a few empty metal chests.

THE GUARDIAN AWAKENS

SHORTLY THEREAFTER, the villain in the hallway succeeds in picking the lock of the door in the east wall. The PCs hear the groaning of the door as it swings open, followed by a sharp scream from the villain, which is cut off by a nasty thump. Another villain runs into the hallway to investigate, and his lifeless body immediately comes flying back into the meeting room. A pair of red eyes glow in the hallway's darkness, swaying slowly back and forth in time to the ring of metal on stone. Within a few moments, the owner of those eyes plods heavily into the meeting room: It is some sort of mechanical man, with a barrel-like chest, jointed metal limbs, and two stubby antennae sprouting from its head.

During the earliest years of its operation, a complement of Martian technicians dwelt in the station (hence the sleeping room and meeting room). At that time, the room to the hallway's east was an office, and metal desks and chairs are still stacked along its walls. After the station had been on line for a few years, however, the technicians were reassigned to another location, and a mechanical guardian was left to deal with intruders and saboteurs. What had formerly been the station's office became the guardian's resting place. By breaking into the station, the villains have brought the guardian back to life.

While the leader of the villains and a few of his men keep watch over the PCs, another dozen of them attack the mechanical man in unison. But fists, blades, and bullets alike impact upon it with no effect. It plods steadily onward, rhythmically swinging its fists, felling a villain permanently with each blow.

Meanwhile, a few other villains slip past the melee, running for the door to the outside. The PCs hear a loud sizzling sound echo from that direction, followed by a cry of pain. The escaping villains rush back into the room, one holding to his chest a hand that literally smokes. They report to the captain, "The thing has locked us in, and the door is guarded with lightning!" As the captain weighs this news, the mechanical man approaches steadily nearer.

If, for some reason, the PCs attempt to attack the mechanical man during this part of the adventure, let them roll their dice, then tell them, "You hit, but it doesn't do any damage." Then, without rolling any dice yourself, describe how the thing clobbers another villain, who drops lifelessly to the floor. The message ought to be obvious to them: There is no way to attack the mechanical man successfully. He moves slowly enough that he can be run from, however—assuming there is someplace to run to.

DEEPER INTO TROUBLE

FACED WITH A SEALED DOOR and a seemingly unstoppable opponent, the villains' captain decides to opt for the only other exit: the stairs leading downward in the room's northeast corner. To guard himself and his few remaining men against the possibility of a trap or an ambush, he insists that the PCs precede him down the stairs. As the composite party heads in that direction, the station's mechanical guardian finishes off the last of its attackers and turns toward the escaping group, plodding slowly but steadily after them.

The next level the group comes to contains two huge machines that throb with a rhythm just below the threshold of hearing. Any PC who succeeds at a quick roll versus Mechanics (electricity or machinist) skill will immediately recognize these machines as great pumps. At the east end of each of them, a large pipe comes up through the floor and bends to join the back of the machine. At the west end, another pipe exits each machine and passes through the wall of the station. Water from under the dead canal at the cliff's base is drawn upward through the eastern pipes and pumped outward into the base of the lake through the western pipes.

The pumps move more water than the dead canal at the cliff's top can carry,



resulting in the lake.

What is not evident in this room is the pumps' power source.

After the PCs have had a few minutes to look around, the villains' captain calls them back out into the stairwell and orders them downward. The mechanical guardian has almost reached the rear fringes of the group, and the captain has decided that this floor offers no hope for escape.

Continuing down the stairwell, the PCs enter the station's lowest floor. Like the middle floor, it is composed of one large room. The pipes attached to the eastern end of the two great pumps on the floor above enter this room from the floor and exit through the ceiling.

In the center of the room, a glowing, glassy sphere almost 20 feet in diameter rests upon an immense metal tripod, the legs of which are rusted and pitted with age. The light from the sphere seems to pulse, and the PCs feel all of the hair on their bodies stand on end with static electricity while their clothing clings uncomfortably to them. From the bottom of the sphere, large conduits dangle and snake across the floor in various directions, but it seems they are unconnected to anything and lead nowhere.

LIKE CORNERED RATS

THE PCs' VISUAL INSPECTION of this machine is broken by a hoarse scream from the stairway. The station's guardian has caught up with the villains and is wreaking havoc among them once again. As their captain sweeps his gaze around the room and realizes there is no exit, a whimper escapes his lips. Then, with a ferocity born of terror, he turns and wades through his men to battle the mechanical man.

The PCs have a few moments in which to act before the guardian finishes with the villains. They may have deduced that the device in this room is some sort of alien power station and that it provides the electricity for the charged exit on the main floor. If they look the machine over any closer, it will become

obvious to anyone who makes a Simple roll versus Observation that one of the legs of the tripod upon which the sphere rests has rusted almost completely through. In fact, with little effort the PCs could topple the whole contraption over. To do so, they will need to make a combined skill roll, using the total of their Strength attributes to determine the number of dice allowed. The target level for the task is Formidable (but the referee can adjust this up or down if desired).

SOME GOOD NEWS AND SOME BAD NEWS

WHILE THE PCs STRAIN to topple the energy device, the mechanical man destroys the last of their captors and starts across the floor toward them.

Just before he reaches the nearest character, the tripod's weak leg gives way, and the sphere tears loose from its moorings to shatter on the stone floor in a shower of flying glass and searing light. When their vision clears, the PCs discover the mechanical man frozen in place, its eyes no longer glowing with power.

The hum of the pumps on the floor above has stopped as well, and the player characters can hear the pipes groaning with the flow of water rushing downward.

Within a few moments, fractures begin to appear in all of the pipes, spraying water at high pressure into the room. Then one of the pipes suddenly begins to tear loose from the ceiling, releasing a deluge that threatens to flood the building.

The player characters have only a few minutes in which to climb the stairs and exit.

As they do so, they can feel the building shudder around them as if in the grip of an earthquake.

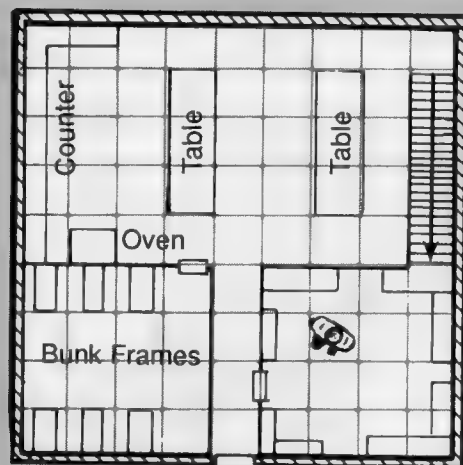
Regaining the surface, the player characters exit the building just before it tears loose from the cliff and tumbles downward, releasing the waters of the lake in a torrent to the plain at the cliff's base.

The player characters' lives have been saved, and they have escaped their captors.

But in the process an ancient device of great power has been destroyed, and an oasis in the desert has forever been lost. Ω

Pumping Station

Ground Level



Basement

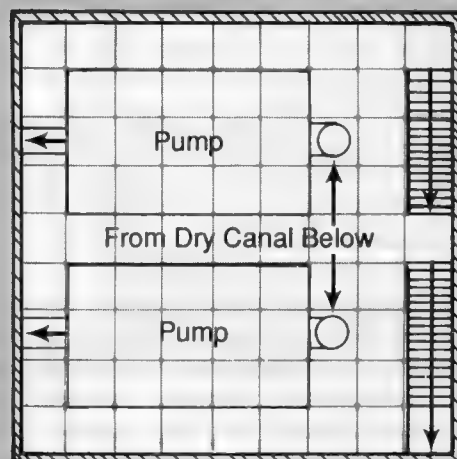
To Lake

Pump

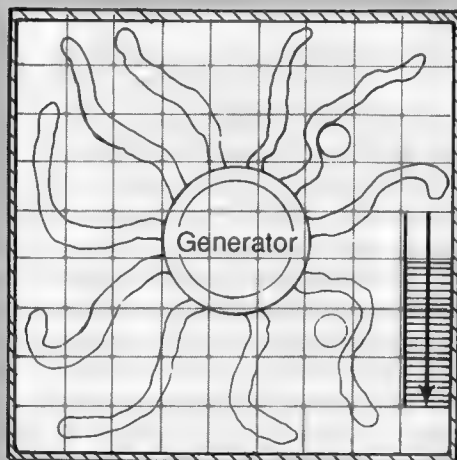
From Dry Canal Below

Pump

To Lake



Subbasement



Key



Mechanical Man



Door



Stairway Down



Pipe Down



Mysterious Conduit



N



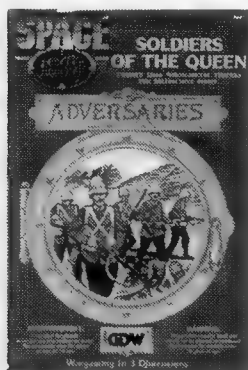
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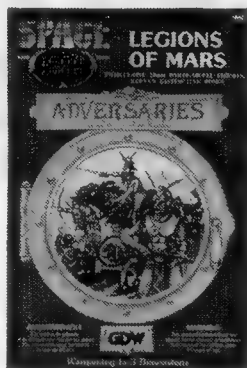
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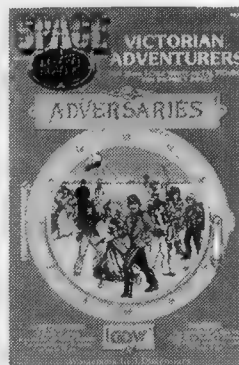
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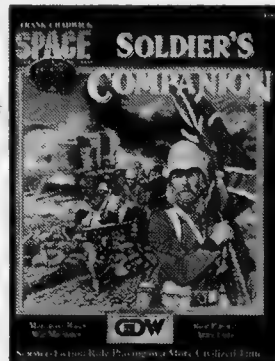
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THE CHARACTER generation rules in **Space: 1889** are intended to permit the generation of British subjects—and succeed very well at that. The generation of American characters, however, requires some modifications to the basic rules, primarily in the specific careers available. Likewise, since America differed from Great Britain in certain social aspects, this article will summarize those differences. All page references are to the **Space: 1889** rule book.

AMERICA AND THE WORLD

AMERICA in the late-19th century had just begun to exercise its economic muscles and had not yet developed military ones. America had no colonies in 1889, a relatively small standing army, and some thoughts of building a modern navy. It did, however, have economic spheres of interest: Americans believed that it was their God-given right to go anywhere and sell anything to anybody who had the money.

The vast plains of the Midwest produced grain in quantities previously unthought-of, and the burgeoning railroad network constructed in the '70s and '80s permitted this grain to be readily transported to eastern harbors for shipment and sale to Europe. American factories were growing rapidly, and while they were closing in on those of Great Britain, they had not yet overtaken them. Overall, the American economy was in its infancy, but some observers were already predicting that the baby would soon grow up to be a behemoth.

Americans were world-class in one category, however: machines. Nobody could invent them, build them, or maintain them like Americans. When Oscar Wilde said, "There is no country in the world where the machinery is as beautiful as in America," he did not mean physical beauty, but the beauty of a well-oiled, efficient mechanism. American machines worked, and they worked well, and American tools were acknowledged to be second to none.

Americans had a fascination with gadgets and gizmos that was to continue into the 20th century and was to change the world radically. The back-

Ye Can Always Tell a Yankee, But Ye Canna Tell 'im Much

Loren K. Wiseman

yard inventor and the tool shed tinkerer were typically American mythic characters. Tom Swift, Hank Morgan, and their ilk would soon replace the Horatio Alger-type heroes in American literature.

In some ways, America is the same as it was then. In many other ways, however, there was a tantalizing mix of the alien and the familiar. Cigarettes (especially those new-fangled ready-mades) were still viewed as a radical invention in some circles and were illegal in some states. Edison (who chewed) refused to hire cigarette smokers. Baseball was the great American pastime in 1889, but the rules were not the same as today. In 1889, overhand pitching had only recently been introduced, and the batter could signal for a high or low pitch (the pitcher was required to oblige).

The dimensions of the field were recently altered (the distance from the pitcher's plate to home plate was increased from 45 to 50 feet in 1881¹),

and no pitcher's mound appears in the rules until 1903.

AMERICAN SOCIETY

"THERE ARE only about 400 people in New York society," one social arbiter remarked in 1888 in reaction to the publication of that city's first social register. It contained 3600 entries drawn from telephone customer listings, among other sources (this is not as silly as it sounds—the telephone was still something of a rich man's toy in those days). The statement is of value here only in indicating one person's opinion of the number of socially acceptable people in the largest city in America: 400 out of four million.

Class divisions in America were not as sharp as in Europe, and movement between them was much easier. Few families had been in America for more than a few generations, and most Americans were not interested in pedigrees—only the present (and the future, of course) was important. America had no royal family and no titled nobility, but it did have a rough equivalent in the various "socially acceptable" families in each community.

Social level in America revolved completely around money and how you had gotten it: If you had made the family fortune, you were *nouveau riche*; if your father had made it, you were barely acceptable; and if your grandfather had made it, you were in.

The *aristocracy* consisted of two parts: old and new. The old were the prestigious families of the eastern seaboard (like the Adams) and families like the Vanderbilts, whose money had been around long enough to have worn off some of the stigma. The new were the families of the self-made millionaires like Andrew Carnegie or John Rockefeller, who still had a slight *nouveau riche* taint to overcome. Unlike the aristocrats of England, however, engaging in business was not socially forbidden—provided it was the right kind of business (that is, if there were heaps of money to be made at it) and provided that your family fortune had been made by a remote ancestor (it was acceptable to make

¹Before you baseball fans write scathing letters, bear in mind that the distance was extended again, in 1893.

money if you already had a lot of it to start with). Indeed, the aristocracy of America tended to send its sons into business. (It tended to send its daughters to Europe to marry land-rich but cash-poor noblemen.) Government was the only other respectable career.

At their best, these people could be quite laudable. Andrew Carnegie founded libraries throughout the country and was famed for other philanthropies. It was Carnegie who said, "The man who dies rich dies disgraced."

At their worst, these people could be totally ruthless and uncaring, especially where business was concerned. Competitors were to be eliminated by whatever means worked, legal or illegal, short of actual murder. The callous and conspicuous displays of wealth (especially during the minor recessions of the era) defined a stereotype for the bloated, money-grubbing, sybaritic capitalist that became a stock character in many melodramas and provided ammunition for anarchists and Marxists for decades.

The *gentry* were the less wealthy versions of the aristocracy—those who hadn't quite made the climb to multimillionaire yet or who had fallen from that dizzying height. Ante bellum Southern families (who tended to be on the landlord end of the sharecropper system) were often in this class. The American Civil War (aka the War Between the States) had eliminated (or freed) the bulk of their wealth but left their pride intact.

In the North, the growing economy spawned thousands of mills, factories, newspapers, breweries, steamship



SPACE 1889

lines, railroad lines, banks, and brokerage houses, and their owners were accumulating money faster than it could be spent (remarkable though it seems). Not that there was any shortage of places to put it: There was always some new invention to be invested in (the cash register, for instance, or that new-fangled office machine that was revolutionizing business paperwork—the typewriter).

The *middle classes* were likewise burgeoning. They consisted of the same sort of people as the middle classes in Great Britain and in many ways were identical to them, except for a more optimistic attitude about their immediate future. America was obviously on the way up, they felt. Any boy could grow up to be president, if only of a major business concern. All it took was hard work, intelligence, and a free marketplace.

The *working classes* of America's cities were mostly immigrants or the children of immigrants. (Between 1845 and 1917, 33 million immigrants settled in the United States.) They labored in the factories of the gentry and the sweatshops of the middle class, and dreamed of better days to come. Unions were in their infancy, and this was the time of the 12-hour work day and the six-day work week (although the burgeoning unions would soon

The Closing of the Frontier

THE TRUTH of the statement that "every laborer could dream of owning his own farm if he worked and saved" was largely due to the gigantic quantities of inexpensive land opened up to settlement by the end of the Indian wars. The census of 1890 would conclude that the American frontier no longer existed, and most of the country could be counted as organized, if not actually civilized.

Except for occasional flareups (the Ghost Dancers of the plains Indian

tribes, for example) the great Indian wars were over. Red Cloud and Crazy Horse were dead. Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé and Geronimo of the Chiricahua had surrendered, and Sitting Bull of the Sioux had recently been on tour with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. The clash between cultures was inevitable, and the final defeat of the various tribes was simply a matter of time after 1865. Some tribes emerged in better shape than others, but even those that coop-

erated with the army (such as the Crow) usually got shafted.

Huge ranches (often owned by absentee landlords) dominated the grazing areas of the West once the Indians were out of the way. The Homestead Act allowed settlers to acquire cheap land, but the influx of farmers was viewed with alarm by the local cattlemen, who often opposed settlement with criminal measures (such as those which caused the so-called Johnson County War).

change both of these). Children were employed as soon as they became strong enough to do work, and most women either worked in a sweatshop or did piecework at home. The lucky ones were employed as servants of the middle and upper classes. Nevertheless, there was still a good deal of optimism, and most believed that their children, at least, would have a better life than they.

The *rural laborers* tended to be farmers or ranch hands in America, although in some regions they were miners (copper, lead, silver, and gold in the West, coal in the Appalachians, iron in upstate Minnesota). Unlike Great Britain, there was plenty of room for agricultural expansion (the conclusion of the last of the Indian wars had seen to that), and every laborer could dream of owning his own farm if he worked and saved.

ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES for Americans are determined in the standard fashion, without modification (although the definitions of the various social levels are somewhat different from those listed in **Space: 1889**).

The types of skills available are the same, and these skills are obtained in the same way as for British characters, although the specific careers differ somewhat. General skill points are allocated as noted on page 12 of the rules. Skill explanations remain identical.

CAREERS AND MONEY

THE RULES ON CAREERS, wealth, additional benefits, and inventions outlined on pages 12-13 of the rules remain unchanged, except as outlined below.

Government Careers

GOVERNMENT CAREERS suitable for **Space: 1889** characters are pretty much the same as in the rule book, with a few minor changes.

In the American Army, there were no fashionable regiments and no native regiments; artillery was largely restricted to coastal batteries; and the technical services were quite small. The U.S. Army had no native regiments, but it did have the scouts, which were similar. Likewise, it had no fashionable regiments, but it did have staff. Americans didn't like their army much (in peacetime, anyway), and it was commonly viewed as a career suitable only for misfits, criminals, and the lower classes (those of higher social standing who insisted on joining the military tried to get themselves assigned to staff positions). Therefore, implement the following changes:

Soc 1: Private soldier—skills for Social Level 1 are unchanged, but add the following branch:

Scouts: Fieldcraft 1, Tracking 2.

Soc 2: Noncommissioned officer—skills for Social Level 2 are unchanged, but add the following branch:

Scouts: End 4+. Fieldcraft 1, Tracking 1, Leadership 1.

Soc 3-5: Line officer, common regiment or scouts—Leadership 2, Marks-

manship 1, Close Combat 1 (pole arms). For Soc 5, technical services are not allowed.

Infantry: Fieldcraft 1, Wilderness Travel 1 (mapping), Observation 1.

Cavalry: Riding 1, Fieldcraft 1, Wilderness Travel 1 (mapping).

Artillery: Gunnery 1 (MLC or BLC), Mechanics 2 (machinist).

Engineer: Engineering 2 (earthworks), Mechanics 1 (machinist).

Surgeon: Medicine 2, Science 1 (biology).

Scouts: Fieldcraft 2, Linguistics 1 (as troops commanded).

Soc 6: Staff officer—Leadership 1, Riding 2 (horse), Eloquence 2, Bargaining 1, Linguistics 1 (any European language).

The U.S. Navy was somewhat more socially acceptable as a career than the army. All skills are identical to those on page 15 of the rules, except that "BLC or machinegun" should be replaced with "MLC or BLC" since the American Navy was not as technologically advanced as the British Navy.

In the United States, the state department is the equivalent of the Foreign Office (even though the only firm foreign policy in 1889 was to have as little to do with foreigners as possible). The careers of agent and diplomat remain the same. Since America has no colonies, it has no Colonial Office and no colonial administrators—the Colonial Office career does not exist. The remaining careers are identical.

Exotic Careers

EXOTIC CAREERS are all identical to those in the **Space: 1889** rules, with the following three additions.

Shootist: Agl 4+. Wilderness Travel 1 (foraging), Fieldcraft 2, Tracking 1, Marksmanship 3 (pistol). As a special bonus, the shootist may fire two pistols in the same action, thus getting off up to six shots per action instead of the normal three. Marksmanship is one less for both pistols.

Circus Performer: Agl 5+. Theatrics 1, Eloquence 1, Fisticuffs 1.

Aerialist/Acrobat: Wilderness Travel 2 (mountaineering), Marksmanship 1 (rifle).

Animal Trainer: Riding 2 (horse, elephant or camel).

Magician/Escape Artist: Crime 3 (lockpick 3, pickpocket 1).



Richest Man in the World



WILLIAM K. "THE PUBLIC BE DAMNED" VANDERBILT considered himself to be the richest man in the world, even though he admitted that certain British nobles owned more property. He held that since their value was tied up in useless property, his income was greater (it was in the millions of dollars).

People with less disposable income than Vanderbilt were only able to accomplish minor investment feats—such as that of New York financier W.R. Grace, who assumed the debt of two Peruvian bond issues in 1890, saving the country from bankruptcy and effectively buying control of the nation's resources (including several railroad leases, all the Peruvian nitrate deposits, five million acres of oil and mineral lands, and the Cero de Pasco silver mines).

Unfortunately for players, people such as these are completely off the scale as far as **Space: 1889** goes. If your character is Social Level 6, you are perhaps a distant cousin to one of these wealthy families, and you have access to only a miniscule fraction of the vast family fortune (assuming you roll high enough).

Gambler: Int 5+. Theatrics 2, Marksmanship 1 (pistol), Observation 2, Eloquence 2.

Service Careers

Service careers are also identical to those in the rule book, except that grounds keeper is replaced by cowboy/frontiersman.

Cowboy/Frontiersman: Soc 2-, End 3+. Riding 2 (horse), Wilderness Travel 2 (foraging), Close Combat 1 (edged weapon or bashing weapon), Tracking 1, Marksmanship 1 (pistol).

Mercantile and Professional Careers

Mercantile and Professional careers are identical.

Criminal Careers

Criminal careers are identical, except that poacher is replaced by rustler, and the career of desperado is added.

Rustler: Soc 2-. Riding 2 (horse), Wilderness Travel 2 (foraging), Tracking 2, Marksmanship 1 (pistol).

Desperado: Soc 3-. Riding 2, Fieldcraft 1, Marksmanship 2 (pistol), Close Combat 2 (edged weapon or bashing weapon). As a special bonus, the desperado may fire two pistols in the same action, thus getting off up to six shots per action instead of the normal three. Marksmanship is one less for both pistols.

RACE

THE 19TH CENTURY was a time of overt racial prejudice, and feelings still ran high on the subject. It wasn't a very happy time to be nonwhite in America. On the other hand, things were not hunky-dory for all whites, either. Blacks shared the lower rungs of society's ladder with other groups: Mediterranean and Eastern Europeans were just beginning to arrive and were subjected to the overt prejudice that the Irish had finally managed to overcome. Jews were subject to mistreatment, especially if they came from eastern Europe. Physical appearance, however, tended to keep blacks, Indians, and Orientals on the bottom. The social and career restrictions below are reasonably historical. It might have been exceptional to see some combinations of race and career, but player characters

represent exceptional individuals, don't they?

Blacks: Blacks were the most numerous of those who could be distinguished by physical appearance. Reconstruction was over, and although slavery had been eliminated, the system of tenant farming and sharecropping that sprang up after the civil war wasn't much of an improvement. The so-called "Jim Crow laws" were beginning to eliminate the freedoms the 13th and 14th amendments had established, and the South (where most blacks still lived—the migrations to northern cities were still to come) was in an economic doldrums that was only to be made worse with the coming of the boll weevil (which would destroy southern agriculture as it was then known). The civil war had settled the question of the existence of slavery, but the racial problems of the "peculiar institution" would last to the present day. Night riders (groups of white vigilantes) intimidated the newly freed slaves and persuaded them to remain in "their proper place." Only in the West, on the frontier, was there a measure of equal opportunity, but the frontier was rapidly vanishing—on Earth.

All was not hopeless, however. In the 1880s, the first freeborn generation of American blacks reached adulthood. There were black colleges (of which Tuskegee in Alabama was the most famous), black intellectuals, black scientists, black cowboys, black soldiers, black professionals (albeit they served only black communities), black sailors (one even commanded a coast guard brig in the gulf of Alaska and as such was the only government for most of that territory and some of Siberia), and even black inventors. No reason exists why there could not have been a black anarchist. Within another generation, a black statesman (Booker T. Washington) would be a dinner guest of the president.

Black Characters: Black characters are restricted to Social Level 3 or lower. Blacks did not achieve ranks higher than noncommissioned officers in the army or petty officers in the navy (and then only in command of other blacks) and were forbidden from the diplomat career, but they may enter any other career for which they qualify.

SPACE 1889



BLOODLETTERS AND BADMEN

ONE OF THE CLASSIC CHARACTERS of the American West was the gunfighter (aka gunman, gunslinger, hired gun, owl-hoot, pistolero, and several dozen other things). For the purposes of Space: 1889, a distinction is drawn between the white hat gunmen we have labeled *shootists* and the black hat gunmen we have labeled *desperados*. Shootists are mostly good guys and have some scruples. Desperados are basically crooks. Some examples: The James gang started out as shootists and ended up as desperados. Wyatt Earp, the Sundance Kid, and any gunfighter John Wayne ever played were shootists. James Dalton, Butch Cassidy, and Lee Van Cleef (in *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*) were desperados. Historical personalities tended to be a complex, continually shifting mixture of both good and evil. Space: 1889 characters, however, can (and should) be larger than life and will show one predominant characteristic.

Oriental: Japanese in America were almost unknown, but Chinese workers had built the western third of the transcontinental railroad, along with much of the rest of the West. They were subject to horrible prejudice and mistreatment in many places, and barely tolerated in others. Anti-Chinese riots were not unusual in some areas.

Oriental Characters: Oriental characters are restricted to Social Level 3 or lower. Orientals operate under the same career restrictions as blacks.

Indians: War, pestilence, and socioeconomic factors had significantly reduced the number of American Indians by 1889. In 1888, congress formally did away with communally held Indian land and gave each Indian family 80 to 120 acres. The plan was to encourage them to take up agriculture. In practice, most were soon forced to sell the land in order to survive or were cheated out of it. The religious revival/antiwhite rebellion called the Ghost Dance began in late 1889 and would end (a couple of years later) in disaster for the tribes involved.

Interestingly enough, it is possible for Indians to have participated in the Indian wars on either (and sometimes both) sides. Members of one tribe sometimes enlisted with the army to fight their tribal enemies (Crow warriors fought as army scouts against the Sioux, for instance, and it was not uncommon for Apaches of one group to assist in fighting another).

Indian Characters: Indian characters are restricted to Social Level 3 or lower. They are restricted from all government careers except the army scouts and navy. They may enter any other career for which they qualify.

Hispanics: Americans of Hispanic descent might be respected, barely tolerated, or subjected to prejudice as horrendous as that inflicted on any other group, depending upon the location. The old "land grant" families of the Southwest were much like some European aristocrats in that they were often land-rich and cash-poor (and like them, they tended to marry into cash-rich but status-seeking Anglo-American families). Among the middle range

of society, different cultural values sometimes caused conflict between whites and Hispanics. Hispanics were also guilty of their own form of prejudice—a distinction was drawn between those of "pure" European ancestry, and those of mixed European and Indian descent. The lower classes were despised by both upper-class whites and upper-class Hispanics.

Hispanic Characters: Hispanic characters are restricted to Social Level 5 or lower (no Hispanic equivalent to the Astors existed). They may be treated with less respect in some circles, however. Hispanics may enter any career they qualify for without other restriction.

CONCLUSION

THIS ARTICLE was not intended to be a complete summary. I encourage players to read up on the period (look in the card catalog under "Gay '90s" or "Gilded Age"). For pictorial references, check out the Time-Life *The West* series. You will find that Buffalo Bill and Calamity Jane looked nothing like Paul Newman and Doris Day. Ω

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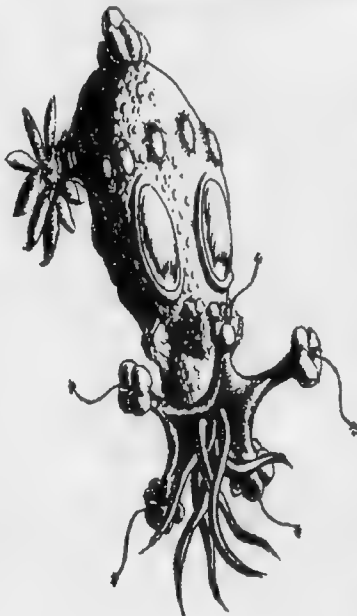
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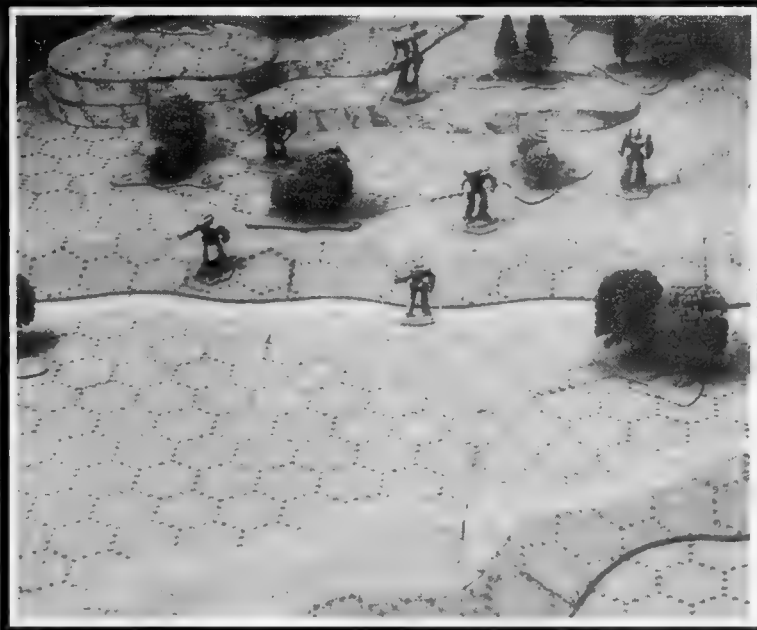
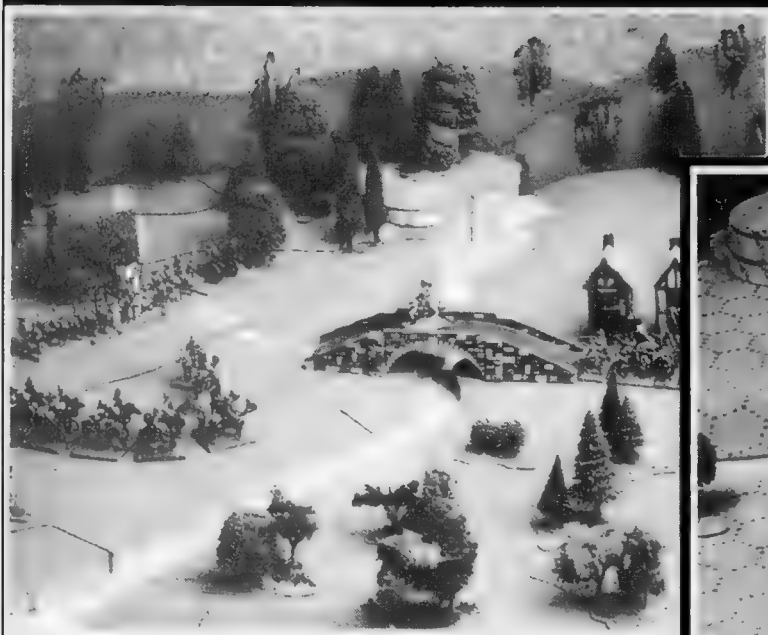
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1889



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Marcus L. Rowland

A few months ago I ran into a problem. I was working on a **Space: 1889** adventure and wanted to playtest it at a convention. Unfortunately, **Space: 1889** had only been on sale in Britain for a couple of weeks, and I knew I'd have trouble finding enough players to make up a good team of adventurers. I was only moderately familiar with the rules and did not feel confident that I could



do justice to the scenario. When I looked through the adventure, I decided what I was really testing was the plot. Would players make the right choices, or would they run into endless dead ends? While the **Space: 1889** background was vital to events in the scenario, there were very few points at this stage of development where the rules were critical.

To make a long story short, I finally decided I'd be better off using rules that I and other players already knew well. Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* was the obvious choice, since I have probably spent more time running it than any other game system. What cinched the choice for me was that I also owned the *Call Of Cthulhu* Victorian background pack, *Cthulhu By Gaslight*.

There are a lot of advantages to using *Call of Cthulhu* rules, not the least of which is that many players are already familiar with them; in Britain it's the third or fourth most popular RPG. By using *Call of Cthulhu* rules you also add an element of fear—players can never be quite sure that you haven't slipped in one or two Mythos creatures, and of course there's nothing to stop you from doing so. At a first glance the sanity rules aren't particularly useful if you are sticking to a strict **Space: 1889** background. But even the bravest Victorian adventurer may occasionally run into a genuinely horrific situation; the sanity rules give you an easy way for fear to affect them.

Although I was developing a **Space: 1889** adventure and wanted to stick to a strict **Space: 1889** background for my playtest, I've since given some thought

to a hybrid system that combines the awesome menace of *Call of Cthulhu* with the interesting backgrounds from *Cthulhu By Gaslight* and **Space: 1889**. I call this system *Cthulhu: 1889*.

BACKGROUND

Ancient ruins hint of strange races that produced many of the known species on Earth, Venus, and Mars. All three worlds have legends of a distant past ruled by hideous monsters, huge and strange beyond all imagination. In 1870 Thomas Edison invented space travel. Today great ether flyers sail the gulf between the worlds. Occasionally they fail to reach their destinations. Why did one freighter, the *Marie Celeste*, reach Venus with half the crew missing, and the rest dead or incurably insane? Why do certain scholars believe the pattern of the canals of Mars is a potent magical symbol? What destroyed the Solar System's fifth planet, now the Asteroid Belt? What are the strange flying forms glimpsed between the planets?

Cthulhu: 1889 is based on the *Cthulhu* Mythos, but it is a Mythos H. P. Lovecraft might have imagined if he were writing some years after humanity colonized the Solar System, as described in **Space: 1889**. The outer worlds are haunted by the creatures of the Mythos. R'lyeh is somewhere in the Asteroid Belt or possibly on the Moon of one of the outer planets; the Plateau of Leng is on Mars; and fire vampires roam the bright side of Mercury.

The ancient Martians drove the worst creatures out of the inner system, and

the canals of Mars are a gigantic warding spell, an Elder Sign on a vast scale, a symbol that is slowly losing its power as the canals fall into ruin. The effort of the canals' construction drained the resources of the canal builders. Their heirs are corrupt and know little of the symbolic significance of the channels.

Occasionally the more powerful and malevolent creatures of the Mythos venture closer to the inner worlds, summoned by evil magicians or taking advantage of rare natural events which negate the power of the Martian pattern. Earth still has its share of evil cultists and sinister sites, but they are just part of a much bigger picture. There are similar cults on Mars and Venus, and the Selenites and Moon Men may also know something of this ancient horror.

Most people know little or nothing of the Mythos; Britannia rules the ether, and the empire (on which the Sun never sets) is slowly expanding toward the stars and toward the horror that waits in the outer Solar System. Of course there are occasional unexplained events, but most people ignore them. Only a few brave souls are aware of the terror that surrounds them and are prepared to fight the creatures of the Mythos.

While it would be possible to set events in this variant system in the 1920s to tie them to the main *Call of Cthulhu* game, a Victorian environment is more fun. There's also the advantage of being able to use anything published for **Space: 1889** without the need to change social and political details.

THE CTHULHU: 1889 SYSTEM

These rules additions will help you set *Call of Cthulhu* adventures against the **Space: 1889** background or run **Space: 1889** adventures under *Call of Cthulhu* rules. To make the most of them, you'll need the *Call of Cthulhu* rules, the **Space: 1889** rules, and *Cthulhu by Gaslight*. If you don't already own both systems, I'd advise trying one game at a time, rather than attempting to learn variants of two games simultaneously!

CHARACTER GENERATION

Use the normal *Cthulhu* and *Gaslight* rules and character sheets, but let players know a few extra languages and skills are available, described as follows.

Conversion Table

Characteristic		Examples		
<i>Cthulhu</i>	1889	Caruthers	<i>Cthulhu</i>	von Gruber
STR	Str×2+6	6×2+6	18	14
DEX	Agil×2+6	3×2+6	12	10
INT	Int×2+6	2×2+6	10	16
CON	End×2+6	1×2+6	8	8
APP	Chr×2+6	4×2+6	14	12
POW	Chr+Soc+6	4+5+6	15	15
SIZ	Str+End+6	6+1+6	13	11
EDU	Soc×2+Int	5×2+2	12	17
SAN			75	75
Hit Points			11	10
Damage Bonus			+1D4	+1D4

Note: Multiply 1889 skills by 10 to get the equivalent skill percentages.

Gunnery

(Base 0%.) **Space: 1889** offers four classes of gunnery skill: breech-loading field gun, muzzle-loading cannon, machinegun, and exotic weaponry (such as rockets). These skills must be taken separately, since they refer to very different types of weapon. All machine-guns use the *Call of Cthulhu* machine-gun rules for multiple shots, etc.

Read/Write Alien Language Speak Alien Language

(Base 0% for nonnatives.) Both these skills work like normal Terran language skills; they only apply to one language. For example, Speak Martian isn't acceptable, but Speak Koline (Canal Martian trade-talk) is allowed. Natives automatically speak their own languages with normal fluency, and they read and write if their culture allows it. See the **Space: 1889** rules for Martian languages (pages 176, 181). Venus only has one language, with no written form, so Speak Venusian is acceptable. See various adventures for the languages of the Moon, etc. (For more information on Martian languages, see **Conklin's Atlas of the Worlds**, pages 68-69. Also, while Venusians—Lizardmen—all speak one language, it does have some regional accents and dialects, the effects of which a referee can adjudicate.)

Read Skin Pattern

(Base INT×2% for Venusians, 0% for others.) Venusians get this skill automatically; anyone else can buy it at normal point costs. A Venusian's skin pattern reveals a lot about his likely behavior. Since all Venusians believe these patterns shape their destiny, they tend to live their lives as predicted. This skill may be used as an alternative to psychology when dealing with Venusians. Most Venusian shamans have this skill at very high levels. (This is a new skill; within the **Space: 1889** rules, it's an Intellect-based default skill for Venusians, an Intellect-based skill (but not a default skill) for all others.)

Pilot Aerial Flyer/ Cloudship/Zeppelin/Ether Flyer Pilot Sailing Vessel/ Steam Vessel/Submarine

All pilot skills start off separately at base 0%, regardless of any other pilot-

ing skills known. Pilot Zeppelin replaces and includes the *Gaslight* skill Pilot Balloon. Most editions of the *Cthulhu* rules contain rules for boating skills to be used for all surface vessels.

Ride

(Base variable, -10% for alien mounts.) You can ride animals native to your own world, but you probably have trouble riding the animals of other worlds. For example, *Cthulhu By Gaslight* gives an upper-class character 25% ride skill; this drops to 15% when riding an animal from another world.

Trimsman

(Base 0%.) The ability to control the altitude and attitude of cloudships and other flyers, depth of submarines, etc.

Other Skills and Social Class

All other **Space: 1889** skills have near or exact *Gaslight* equivalents. All skills that are normally available in *Gaslight* should be available in *Cthulhu: 1889*.

Gaslight and **Space: 1889** both attach considerable significance to social class; this characteristic can be selected by players or randomly generated by a D6 roll as in the Social Class Table.

SOCIAL CLASS TABLE

Die	Class
1-2	Lower class
3-4	Middle class
5-6	Upper class

One last point about character generation—when developing statistics, don't forget the Sanity rating. This is a hybrid system, and there are *things* out there in the void of space—the sort of *things* that tend to have a rather damaging effect on this particular characteristic.

COMBAT

For all melee and small arms combat, use the normal *Cthulhu* rules. All the hand weapons in **Space: 1889** can be found in *Cthulhu*. See below for how to convert NPC weapon skills and animal attacks.

For airborne combat use the **Space: 1889/Sky Galleons of Mars** rules; however, shots are fired and either hit or miss using normal *Cthulhu* skill rolls.

To relate **Space: 1889** artillery dam-



age to *Cthulhu* rules, divide the burst indicated in the **Space: 1889** field gun and cannon firing tables by two to give the explosion radius; damage is 1D6 per burst, also divided by two. For example, a 5" howitzer has a burst value of 14 in **1889**. For *Cthulhu* this is reduced to seven yards in radius, damage 7D6. This "quick and dirty" conversion may not suit every referee. In practice, you are probably dead if you are anywhere near an exploding shell, so precision isn't too important.

SPACE TRAVEL

Use the **Space: 1889** rules for ether flight. Some creatures of the Mythos may present additional hazards for space travellers.

NPC CONVERSION

It may occasionally be useful to convert characters from published **Space: 1889** material to *Cthulhu: 1889* rules. Don't worry about exact conversion of NPC skills and characteristics; this is a game, not a bookkeeping exercise! As a rough guide, multiply **Space: 1889** characteristics by two and then add six to get their *Cthulhu* equivalents, or use a combination of two characteristics as in the Conversion Table on page 46. SAN and other figured characteristics (such as hit points and damage bonuses) are generated normally. The examples are for Colonel Caruthers, the sample character in the **Space: 1889** rule book, and Baron Hasso von Gruber, a notorious **Space: 1889** NPC.

ALIEN ANIMALS

Alien animals should be run as the nearest possible *Cthulhu* equivalent. If the nearest equivalent is a Mythos creature, use the statistics for it, but there will be no SAN effect; it will not be intelligent; and it will have no magic or supernatural powers. For example, a ruumet breehr uses the characteristics of a rhinoceros. A great komkota uses the characteristics of a hunting horror but has no spells, is not affected by daylight, and is not intelligent.

MYTHOS CREATURES

Almost all creatures capable of flying through the ether are faster and much more maneuverable than any human-built ether flyer.

Azathoth is surrounded by vast whirlpools of ether turbulence which are thousands of miles in diameter. Any ether flyer caught in the turbulence will be inexorably sucked toward the god; the only escape is to dismiss *Azathoth* before it's too late. Travellers are strongly advised to avoid *Azathoth*.

Byakhee and *shantaks* are among the creatures most likely to be encountered in space. *Star vampires* are encountered less frequently. Fortunately, all seem to be repelled by the radiation of ether screws. Any ship which is forced to cut engine power may have some unwelcome visitors.

The colour out of space (see *Cthulhu Now*) is another infrequent visitor to our system. It may possibly attack ether flyers and may be attracted by (or able to feed on) the radiation of ether screws.

Cthulhu is still confined in R'lyeh, but R'lyeh itself may be mobile; it may be an asteroid, moon, or comet. If *Cthulhu* is freed, he undoubtedly has the ability to fly between the planets, using his wings to harness the ether. *Cthulhu* is massive and comparatively slow moving, cruising at about one to two million miles per day.

Deep Ones are very common on Venus and unknown on Mars. Many Venusians are probably tainted with their blood.

Fire vampires infest the bright side of Mercury and may be attracted to the bright ether drives and solar boilers of spacecraft. They try to steal magic points from passengers and crew; unfortunately, the fire vampires usually burn their way through the hull to reach their targets! Such incidents are usually reported as meteorite damage.

Flying polyps are known to have colonized several worlds in the Solar System. If you see a mysterious well covered with stone anywhere in the Solar System, don't be tempted to lift the lid!

The Great Race of Yith undoubtedly explored much of the Solar System and may even have reached the stars. A base or ether flyer built by this race would be the archaeological find of the century—and would probably also be

unbelievably dangerous.

Mi-Go, the fungi from Yuggoth, are disinclined to have anything to do with the "primitives" of the inner worlds, although they occasionally visit to mine rare ores. They are occasionally sighted by ether flyer crewmembers, who usually know better than to report their observations. *Yuggoth* (Pluto) hasn't yet been discovered by Terran astronomers.

Nightguants probably inhabit the more hellish corners of most worlds.

Yog-Sothoth is another outer god that occasionally visits the inner planets. The last log entry of the freighter mentioned under Background (page 46) described a sighting of "iridescent bubbles."

ALIEN RELIGIONS

Most alien races have at least one religion inspired by creatures of the Mythos. On Mars, for example, the Cult of the Worm is the most likely suspect, and Nyarlathotep the most likely deity behind the scenes.

However, the cults of the Mythos tend to be extremely secretive. It is entirely possible that there is another cult concealed behind the facade of the Worm, and that the Worm Cultists themselves (although murderous) aren't actually Mythos-inspired.

SCENARIO:

A SOUVENIR OF MARS

Professor Philbeam, a noted NPC archaeologist, is travelling to Earth from Mars on the same liner as the player characters. He seems remarkably unfriendly and rarely leaves his cabin.

It's soon common gossip that he spends a lot of time writing but is occasionally seen staring into a metal box, a cube approximately six inches to a side. He closes the box if anyone enters the cabin.

On the fourth or fifth night out, he is found dead with his left hand amputated. The hand is missing, and no papers are found in the cabin. A knife is clutched in the corpse's right hand.

Somehow the box falls into the hands of the PCs. It is empty, although curiously heavy. It is also a little bigger than they remember others saying it to be—about seven inches to a side. The outside is a uniform, plain, metallic gray and is slightly bloodstained, but the inner surfaces are clean and seem to be

mottled with moiré patterns that never appear the same twice. Although they are never seen to move, they are different every time the box is opened or every time anyone even blinks while looking inside. The lid isn't hinged to the box in any normal manner; it pivots on concealed pins, but it fits so closely that there is no obvious way to inspect the pins short of smashing the box.

Sooner or later someone should put something in the box and shut the lid; if it is opened again, the object that was inside is gone. If something living (such as a mouse or a canary, or even a leaf or a piece of fruit) is put inside, the box seems to expand slightly. It gets about two-thirds of an inch bigger in all dimensions every time this occurs. Expansion is slow, and no seams or joints can be seen. Even the bloodstains on the outside of the box seem to expand.

Even if the adventurers don't investigate the box, whoever is looking after it will start to feel very possessive and must make a SAN roll once every 1D6 hours. If the roll is failed, the adventurer will put something living in the box and then lose 1-2 SAN. Alternatively, small living creatures (such as spiders, cockroaches, and other vermin) will start to find their own way into the box and somehow push the lid closed.

If the PCs try to throw the box off the ship, it will be found inside again a few hours later. No one can explain this.

When the box becomes a 10-inch cube, or if anyone tries to smash it, it abruptly folds. First the lid opens, then the edges of the box split, and finally it flattens out into a cross shape. The entire flat cross seems to twist and writhe without actually moving. A second later, in a multidimensional rotation that is impossible to describe, the cross becomes a peculiar structure that mathematically minded adventures will recognize as a three-dimensional representation of a hypercube. Anyone witnessing this must make a SAN roll or lose 1-3 SAN.

The whole object collapses again to form a cube which seems to fold in upon itself and then disappears. A second later bells ring, and the entire ether flyer shakes; if the teammembers look out any porthole, they'll find that the ship is floating inside an eye-wrenching structure of straight lines and planes that seem to meet at impossible angles—it

is inside the hypercube! The internal structure glows without any obvious light source. There is no air. Everyone must make a SAN roll or lose 1D6 SAN (lose 1 SAN if the roll is successful).

The ship remains trapped for several days or weeks—long enough for several passengers and crewmembers to go insane, but not long enough for food to run short. Anyone venturing outside soon finds that it's impossible to get near the walls of this strange space, let alone damage them. Anyone or anything moving toward the walls suddenly reappears on the far side of the space, moving back toward the ship. The ether screws don't work, and there isn't enough light to run the solar boiler properly.

Two other objects are floating in this space besides the ship: a sheaf of papers and Philbeam's hand. The papers are Philbeam's manuscript, which reveals that he bought the box from a Hill Martian tribesman who swore that it had fallen from the skies. At that time it was only two inches on a side. The notes describe the effects of putting small Martian animals inside. At first Philbeam thought this was just interesting; later he found it harder and harder to disobey the compulsion to "feed" the box. The last bloodstained entry reads "I can't find anything else alive, not even a cockroach. It must be fed. It needs to be fed. The kni...."

At the referee's discretion there might be other things floating in this space—

corpses of the missing crew of the *Marie Celeste*, a boot made of a mysterious silvery material bearing the cryptic logo "NASA," one or two Things That Man Was Not Meant To Know, a few lost pages from the *Necronomicon*, and so forth. Don't try to explain them; leave that for the players.

Eventually the hypercube disappears. The ship is floating in space again—in orbit around one of the Moons of Saturn!

A few simple calculations reveal that the ship will run out of food many months before it can reach any of the inner planets, even if it heads back immediately. More seriously, the solar boiler is unable to be run at all now to provide heat and power for the return trip, due to Saturn's distance from the Sun. The ether flyer the PCs were on is not the only ship present; there are two or three others in similar orbits, all of wholly alien design, meteor-pitted, lifeless, and extremely old. When these ships are investigated, the PCs will learn that none of them seem to have been built with a liftwood hull; all have the remnants of gas bags, which would be useless for a landing on the airless Moon the ship is orbiting.

There's a gigantic building on the Moon, a cube about 200 feet on a side. Scattered around it are the wrecks of more ships. Think big; remember *Alien*, *Forbidden Planet*, etc.

Anyone venturing inside the building (wearing spacesuits that trail oxygen lines and telephone cables) finds the en-



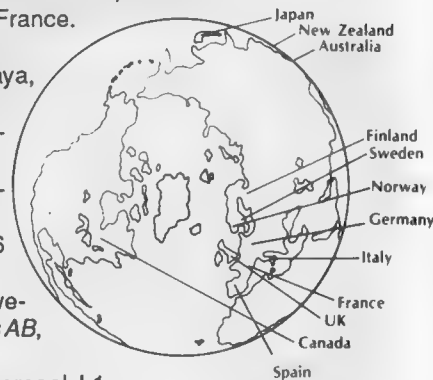
trance to a gigantic, three-dimensional maze. After anyone proceeds a few yards inside the building, it suddenly floods with air, and a guillotine-bladed door slams down, severing the space suit lines and anyone unlucky enough to be standing in the entrance. The only way out is to press on into the maze, which is littered with deadly traps and the desiccated corpses of failed explorers, in hope of locating the exit. Ultimately the maze proves to be a gigantic alien test; its purpose is to find someone worthy to become a god! Eventually someone qualifies. Luck, self-sacrifice, or massive SAN loss might be suitable criteria for selection.

The new god quickly transforms into something beyond human comprehension, losing all remaining SAN in the process. As a last act of compassion, it returns all the remaining adventurers, passengers, crewmembers, and the ship itself to the space-time they disappeared from, midway between Mars and Earth. The cubic building collapses into dust, but the derelict ships remain in orbit. A mad god flies off into the endless void to seek out its fellows. If the survivors are lucky, they'll never meet it again. If they are unlucky.... Ω

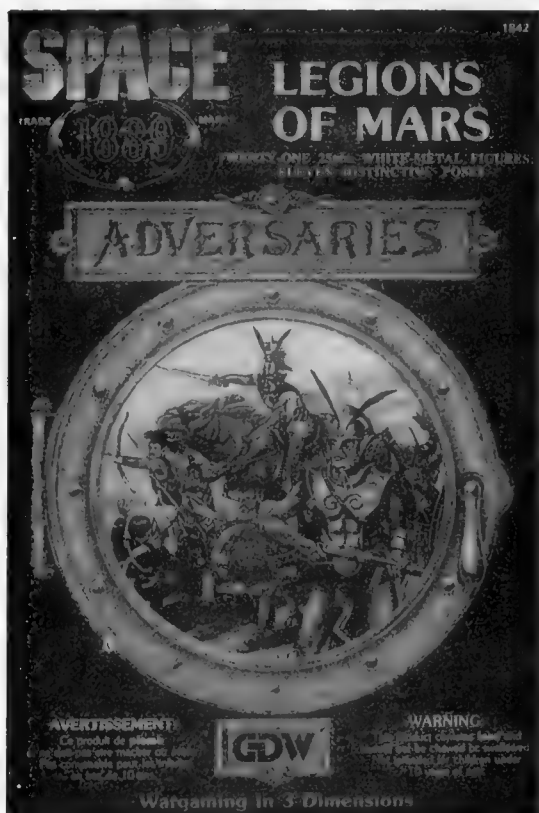
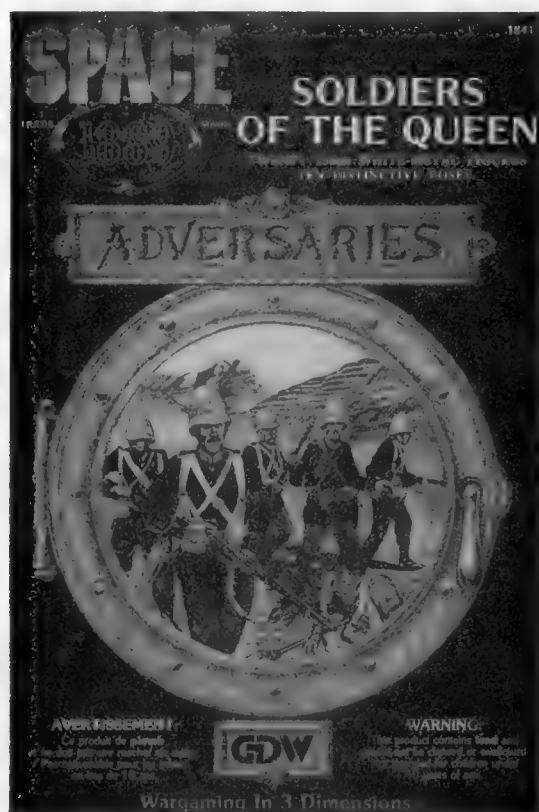
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CHALLENGE *Showcase*



Miniatures in role-playing game systems serve two main functions. First, they are role-playing figures which represent characters being played or encountered, and second, they are soldiers for battles. Their presence on the gaming table both enlivens the look of a game and clarifies questions of positioning, line of sight, and areas of effect in combat.

Last issues' **Victorian Adventurers** were the perfect example of role-playing figures. In fact, my painted-up Dr. Eberwein makes me prefer playing the Inventor character when I adventure to Luna or when I play **Temple of the Beastmen**.

But this month, the subject is the other use of miniatures: for battles. When Frank Chadwick began writing **Soldier's Companion** for **Space: 1889**, he insisted on two boxed sets of miniatures that would provide ready-made units suitable for **Soldier's Companion** battles.

His idea was that a complete unit (in this case, a company of British troops on Mars like **Soldiers of the Queen** or a company of Martian legionnaires like **Legions of Mars**) would make putting together troops for battles that much easier.

Making the troops even more useful was the fact that the Martians could serve equally well as adversaries for the British or as British colonial troops. One set I saw leavened the Martian legionnaires with British, replacing the Officer with Musket and the Officer with Sword and Pistol with a Lieutenant on Foot and a Colour Sergeant.

Next issue, we plan to look at Rocco military vehicles and their suitability for use with **Twilight: 2000**.

Marc Miller

Our aim in Showcase is to provide a look at miniature figures, both old and new, that can enhance your science-fiction gaming. Tell us what you want to know about miniatures: Write Showcase, **Challenge Magazine**, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA.

ADVERSARIES

Soldiers of the Queen



Major on Horse
(Mounted)



Captain on Foot



Lieutenant on Foot



Colour Sergeant



Sergeant
(2 Included)



Corporal
(2 included)



Private
Standing and Firing
(2 Included)



Private
Kneeling and Firing
(2 Included)



Private
Loading
(3 Included)

Legions of Mars



Mounted Officer
(Sword Master)



Officer with
Sword and Pistol
(First Sword)



Officer with
Musket
(Banner Man)



Legionnaire
Firing Shield Gun
(3 Included)



Legionnaire
Firing Musket
(3 Included)



Legionnaire with
Shield and Halberd
(3 Included)

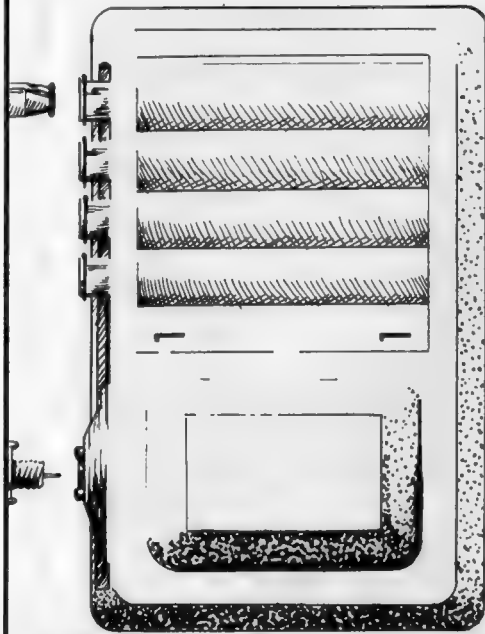


Legionnaire Advancing
with Spear
(3 Included)



Legionnaire with
Coddling Chopper
(2 Included)

New Cyber



A huge spider creeps toward you, tracking you by scent and heat. You'd better run—this is only one piece of the new cybertech equipment coming your way!

AUTOINJECTOR

The autoinjector is a popular piece of medical equipment among soldiers, scientists, and explorers. It is basically a slim box composed of human-compatible synthetics that holds eight doses of drugs, and a microprocessor and blood analyzer. The simple version monitors the levels of various chemical substances in the blood and, in response to changes in blood chemistry, will inject the drugs it has been programmed to use. In most cases, the unit is programmed to respond to the presence of toxins and to inject the proper antidote. The unit is programmed by the insertion of a drug tube which contains, in addition to the drug, a microchip with data for its proper use.

The advanced version has all the features of the simple version and, in addition, has a link from the microprocessor to the person's brain. This link provides the person with data about his blood, as well as very basic medical advice, such as which drug to inject. The

link also allows characters conscious control over the injection of the drugs. Most units have a safety override to prevent the user from injuring himself (for instance, by injecting all the drugs at once). The unit is implanted in the torso and has the injectors linked into a major artery. The blood analyzer also links up to the artery. In the advanced version, the link runs along the spinal cord and into the brain.

2300 AD: The autoinjector unit constantly monitors the bloodstream. If a toxin the unit is programmed to recognize (one that it has an antidote for) is introduced into the blood, the unit will inject the proper antidote drug, negating the toxin's effects. The advanced version allows a character to use the device as a blood analyzer and to make a diagnosis on his own using his Medical skill (the difficulty is based on the task at hand). This unit can also hold drugs like Herc and Bounce, and be programmed to inject them on a timed basis. Or when the blood level/blood chemistry reaches a crisis point, the unit can automatically inject them. Naturally, the owner of the advanced version can control the injection.

Weight: Insignificant (when implanted) **Price:** *Simple Unit:* Lv500 *Advanced Unit:* Lv1000 (includes implantation) *Drug Tube (Reusable):* Lv10+drug cost.

Cyberpunk: The simple and advanced autoinjector versions will constantly monitor the blood chemistry levels and perform injections as programmed. The advanced version allows a character to control the injections and be aware of what is going on in his bloodstream. The simple version is popular with soldiers (who load it with 'dorphs), biotechs and scientists (who load it with antitoxins, antiviral agents, and so forth), and drug users (who load it with 'dorphs, lace, and worse). The advanced version is very popular with Solos, especially those who might get involved with poison, or biological or chemical weapons. Some Solos have

been known to have a "black vial" of poison available to avoid capture (and torture). Some governments and corporations have been known to install little "surprises" in some of their people's autoinjectors. Use your imagination.

Humanity Cost=1 point. Prices: *Simple Unit:* \$200 *Advanced Unit:* \$300 *Drug Tube:* \$5+drug cost (plus an additional cost for exotic chips, especially for viral agents). More sophisticated units are available at increasingly higher costs.

POISON VIAL

The poison vial is an addition to an already installed subdermal weapon, such as slashers. It is an implanted container that holds two uses of a toxic substance. The container is implanted in the finger and replaces either the first or second finger bone. The container can be refilled from a suitable source, generally a hypodermic needle.

2300 AD: The poison vial may be linked up to slashers or (for the very psychotic) to the monofilament garrote. The effect will be that if a being is wounded by the poisoned implement, it will also be subject to the effects of the toxin. The exact effect depends on the toxin used.

Note: This option is not at all well received by law enforcement agencies.

Weight: Insignificant **Price:** Lv100 per vial (implanted). The toxins themselves cost extra.

Cyberpunk: The poison vial may be linked up to scratchers, rippers, or (for the truly insane) "slice 'n' dice." The effect is that anyone wounded with the poisoned weapons is also exposed to the toxins. It is rumored that some particularly disturbed individuals have had vials installed in their "vampire" canine teeth implants. Poison vials are popular with assassins and are considered to be black market cybertech.

Humanity Cost=1 point. Price: \$35 per vial implanted (often more though, especially for "vampires"). The toxins cost extra.

Equipment

SURPRISES

Surprises are a mixed bag of items that are not desired or purchased by the person unfortunate enough to have them in his body. These devices are used to kill people or to control people via the threat of their use. *Warning:* Placing these in player characters can be harmful to your campaign.

The exact specifications of many of these devices are up to the referee since most of these items are tailor made and not "off the shelf." These devices are probably not appropriate to the atmosphere of 2300 AD. However, they are just right for *Cyberpunk*. In *Cyberpunk*, life is tough and short. You should learn to trust no one and nothing, not even your own body. Nonetheless, if you are a referee, you should realize that it is unwise to infest your PCs with these nasties. A sparing use of them can add to the game, but if somebody's head explodes every day, then it won't be long before the players are going to head for greener pastures.

Brain Bomb

This device consists of a small amount of powerful, hard-to-detect explosive material linked to a receiver, a timer, or both. The device is implanted in the base (generally the *medulla oblongata*) of the brain. When the timer runs out or the signal is received (generally from a radio or microwave transmitter), the device explodes, killing the victim. These devices are generally not sold, but they can sometimes be acquired on the black market for a minimum of \$400 (or Lv1000 in 2300 AD). Simple versions are easy to detect (generally by X-ray or more advanced methods) and remove (through surgery performed by a skilled practitioner).

More advanced versions require special detection equipment (like an auto-doc) or exploratory surgery, and are more difficult to remove. Common uses for such devices include prisoner restraint (the device explodes if the prisoner leaves a certain area or if the de-

vice receives a signal to detonate), ensuring military discipline, etc. There are so many varieties of this device that the referee can freely develop his own for whatever purpose he has in mind.

Limb Bomb

A less lethal cousin of the brain bomb, the limb bomb consists of a circular ring of powerful explosives linked to a timer, a receiver, or both. The device is implanted in a limb and is connected around the bone. When detonated, the device severs the limb, causing a serious wound to that part of the body.

Often several limb bombs are implanted simultaneously. In these cases small bombs are planted in the fingers to serve as "warnings"; larger bombs are placed at the wrist, elbow, and shoulder. A similar series of bombs can be arranged utilizing the legs. Neck versions are also available and, as is expected, are fatal. Cheaper versions of the limb bombs include external devices that are locked around the neck or limbs (as in *The Running Man*).

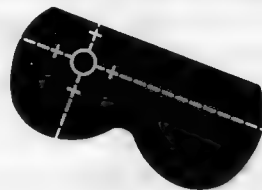
Prices range from \$25 (Lv150) for a timed external finger bomb to \$375 (Lv950) for an internal timer and receiver neck bomb on the black market. These devices are often used in prisoner restraint, to ensure military discipline, or by organized crime for illegal and coercive activities. Some limb bombs are disguised as jewelry (especially rings, watches, necklaces) or clothing (belts, sweatbands), and are used in assassinations. Internal devices are often difficult to detect unless advanced medical equipment is used, but they are easy to remove through surgery (unless trapped to explode upon removal).

External devices are easy to detect unless disguised, but they are hard to remove without killing the wearer as they often incorporate electronic security locks.

Bug Bomb

Bug bomb is a generic term for a wide variety of devices that contain chemical

2300AD



**For 2300 AD
and
Cyberpunk**

Michael LaBossiere

or biological agents which are implanted in the body and released by a timer or by a received transmission. They can be implanted almost anywhere within the body. When activated, they release their contents, which range from chemicals that render the victim unconscious to tailored viral agents.

Bug bombs are fairly popular with governments and corporations because they can be made with dissolving containers (their timers) that hold naturally occurring fatal or crippling bugs. The effects can then be passed off as having natural causes.

Detection and removal of a bug bomb ranges from a fairly routine job to a nightmare ordeal. Sometimes the containers are fabricated out of normal body materials (like bone or cartilage) and contain only a scant number of viruses or microbes. Such bombs are nearly impossible to locate without advanced medical technology and painstaking effort.

Fortunately, such bombs are only used by biotechnology companies and very wealthy governments. Bug bombs are most often used to ensure the loyalty of key personnel, especially employees of biotechnology-oriented corporations.

Extremes

Extremes are devices that go beyond the normal methods of controlling or killing people through implants. Even governments and corporations rarely use extremes.

Some examples of extremes include the implantation of large bombs (sometimes nuclear, if the technology permits—see GDW's **Earth/Cybertech Sourcebook**), implantation of biological agents that will infect others, and implants that turn the victim into a homicidal maniac.

Extremes are often used by terrorists or psychotics to cause terror and to kill seemingly at random. Often an innocent and unknowing victim is selected, implanted, and turned loose. Another scenario involving the use of extremes is when an enemy is captured, implanted, and allowed to escape back to his friends or superiors (along with a bomb or viral agent).

Extremes should be used very rarely, and should almost never be used on a player character.



A cutoff is the slang term for a special neurochip that serves, on the owner's command, to prevent the central nervous system from being aware of what is happening to the body. Simply put, when the cutoff is engaged, the brain will not realize that the body is damaged, hungry, tired, or in need of restroom facilities. Further, the chip also deadens fear, shock, and panic responses. This is useful for situations in which your body would interfere with the achievement of your goals (such as not revealing information under torture or staying on your feet when wounded).

2300 AD: If a chip implanted in a character is activated, the character will not feel pain, hunger, fear, etc. In combat, if the character is wounded, he cannot be dazed, and shock points and stun points are cut in half. If the chip is turned off while the character is wounded, the full effects of the wounds will set in. The character loses only one initiative level for every two light wounds when the chip is activated, and his cool increases by two. However, there are serious side effects to using the chip. When the chip is on, the character becomes very emotionally cold and distant, which may affect how others relate to him (and may impair leadership and other social skills). More seriously, every half-hour the chip is used reduces the character's senses by about one percent. In other words, 100 30-minute uses will leave the character without any sensory capacity (making him blind, deaf, and numb). Surgical installation of the chip requires a very skilled surgeon (it is implanted within the *medulla oblongata*). These chips are carefully regulated for obvious reasons.

Price: Lv8000 (includes installation).

Cyberpunk: The character who has this chip installed and activates it will not feel pain, hunger, fear, etc. In combat, the character's Cool statistic will in-

crease by two. Flesh wounds have no effect and are not even noticed by the character.

Serious Wounds: Breaking arms or legs renders them useless, but the character will not feel the pain, so he can continue to use the limb at reduced efficiency. Broken ribs reduce Movement Allowance by one-fourth and ability to attack and defend by -1. A skull fracture reduces Intelligence, Reflexes, and Cool by one-fourth (due to structural damage, not pain).

Critical Wounds: Limbs which take critical wounds are unusable, but the character will not feel the pain. If the lungs are punctured, the character can still move at one-fourth his Movement Allowance. If the abdominal organs are damaged, the character has his Intelligence, Reflexes, and Cool cut to one-fourth their normal level, and his Movement Allowance drops to one-fourth normal. Major damage to the lower abdomen and groin has the same effect as damage to the abdominal organs. A crushed skull has full, normal game effects (see *Friday Night Firefight*, page 12), even though the character won't feel it. If the skull is crushed, there is a 10-percent chance the cutoff chip will be destroyed and a 20-percent chance it will be deactivated.

Mortal and Dead Instantly Wounds: While the character won't feel the pain of his imminent or instant death, the chip won't provide any additional help.

Finally, the character has the benefit of a -2 on his consciousness saves while the chip is on. Turning the chip off while still injured will result in the full effects of the injury coming into play immediately. Naturally, severe disadvantages are associated with the chip. First, every half-hour of use costs the character a one-percent reduction in his senses. Second, the chip makes him aloof, which translates into a Humanity Cost of 1 for every hour the chip is used. Third, some chips have been known to be equipped with add-ons that actually cause pain, hunger, etc., at the command of the person owning the activating transmitter. These chips are often used to ensure loyalty or to control people.

HC=2D6+3 (initially). **Price:** The chip is black market (but is available in the military and in some corporations) and is priced between \$750 and \$1000.



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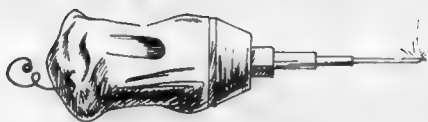
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HORNET

Hornet is the trade name for a fingertip implant. The implant is similar to implanted blades but differs in that it consists of replacing the first bone of a finger with a cylinder equipped with an extendable hypodermic needle. The device is constructed entirely of organic materials and is virtually undetectable, except by thorough investigation of the fingers with advanced medical scanners. The hornet links into the character's nervous system, and enables him to extend and retract the needle at will, as well as control the injection of the poison stored in the cylinder (it is good for two doses).

The needle is not strong enough to penetrate armor, but will go through normal clothing. It does no damage,

except for the effect of the poison in the cylinder. The effect depends on what type of poison is used. It can be refilled by a syringe.

2300 AD: Price: Implantation: Lv300 per finger Refill: Variable Note: Detection is a Very Difficult task.

Cyberpunk: HC=1 per hornet. Price: Implantation: \$20 per finger Refill: Variable.



BAT

Years of military research in sound-ranging devices and data translation have resulted in the bat skull implant. This device consists of a high-frequency pulse generator, a receiver, and a microprocessor and imager that converts sound reflections into imagery the human brain can interpret. What the person "sees" has been described as similar to infrared imaging, except dif-

ferent reflection capacities yield different colors. The unit can also be switched to a dot display which shows the position of objects relative to the person (sort of like a radar screen). Two models are available: One provides an area of coverage equal to normal human vision (but may be set in the back of the head for rear "vision"). The other provides a 360-degree field of detection. This model takes some getting used to and is only usable on dot mode—to prevent sensory overload. It can be "scaled down" to normal vision range and used in nondot mode. The device is implanted in a character's head and is linked into the nervous system. While some people complain of headaches after prolonged use, there have yet to be any serious side effects.

The device provides a character with something much like sonar, and it will enable him to detect and range any object that reflects sound waves. Very soft objects will show up faintly, and very dense objects will register very brightly. While this implant will tell the character what is around him in terms of general shape, size, and density, it lacks the ability to detail features. For example,

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"Grand Alliance" is a fully computer moderated play-by-mail game which involves the battle of survival between human and alien races. Players represent either a member of the human race or of the alien race with the universe as a setting. The game is played on a map of three parallel levels where each level is composed of 240 planetary systems. Each player must solve military and political problems within their own camp before war can be waged effectively against the opposing race. Each side is faced with the same situations and problems to overcome.

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two humans of roughly the same size will "look" the same. On dot mode a bat is even less discriminating. It displays lines for large objects (walls) and dots for smaller objects (people, furniture). The device has an effective range of 10 meters before distortion makes the results unintelligible (a stronger pulse would correct this problem, but would also require more power and shielding for a person's head). Finally, loud noises and pressure waves (from concussion grenades, explosions, etc.) will create distortions and false signals.

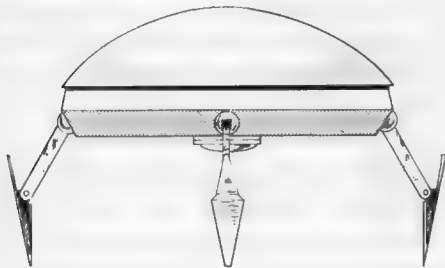
2300 AD: Price: Normal Bat: Lv1300 Deluxe Bat: Lv2250.

Cyberpunk: Price: Normal Bat: \$400, HC=1D6 Deluxe Bat: \$800, HC=2D6.

CYBERFORM

Research in microcybernetics and organic systems has resulted in the development of cyberform technology. A cyberform consists of a synthetic body structure that is controlled by an organic central processor. Current cyberform technology has produced the A model spider and the B model centipede.

Cyberforms behave in combat as animals would, except that cyberforms have definite, programmed functions to fulfill and are single-minded about completing their tasks. They are considered to be black market items in most areas, and as such will be difficult to acquire and expensive (two to five times the listed price). Programming them to attack particular targets requires data on the target (heat pattern, scent, etc.) that must be put into the unit's memory. Being experimental, these units have been known to suffer strange malfunctions, especially since they are partially organic. There are rumors that larger and more dangerous cyberforms are being developed, but these rumors are so far unconfirmed.



Spider

The spider consists of a 10-centimeter-wide disk body that is four centimeters thick at its thickest point. The cen-

tral disk contains the unit's OCPU, as well as its memory chips and sensors (both infrared and olfactory—10 meter range). Finally, the disk contains the unit's weapon, a poison injector needle. Located on the disk's rim are four legs, each containing a synthetic substance that can create up to 30 meters of "string" that is strong enough to support the unit's weight and is used to lower the unit. The unit tracks by scent and heat (and can be programmed to attack individual humans or to attack living things of certain types).

2300 AD: The spider has an armor value of .2 and a life level of 5. It has no signature, an initiative of 8, and is Very Difficult to hit. A successful attack (the needle will only penetrate normal clothing) injects a poison (DP=2), and the unit has four doses available.

Price: Lv400+Lv25 per poison dose.

Cyberpunk: The spider has an SP of 2 and an SDP of 1. The needle cannot penetrate anything thicker than normal clothing, but a successful attack will poison the victim (the exact effect depends on the poison). The unit should be considered to have an REF of 6, a skill in Attack of +2, and Athletics skill of +4. The needle is accurate (+1).

Price: \$150+cost of the poison (varies with type).



Centipede

Designed for jungle combat, the centipede is the second model of cyberform to be produced. The unit has two 20-centimeter body segments each equipped with four legs (each leg contains synthetic material capable of producing 30 meters of "string" that is strong enough to hold the unit) and a 20-centimeter head section that is equipped with a dart gun and mandibles. The unit has infrared, ultraviolet, olfactory, and crude visual sensors that enable it to recognize a target up to 100 meters away. The unit can be programmed to attack particular individuals (the data for up to six people can be stored in its memory), certain types (humans, Kafers, etc.), or anything that moves. These units have

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an incredible psychological effect on the humans that have fought them, as they look and behave like demonic insects. They are not intelligent but have combat programming that enables them to engage in rudimentary strategies (ambush, group operations, camouflage, etc.).

2300 AD: The centipede has an armor value of .4 and a life level of 15. Its signature is -6; it has an initiative of 10; and it is Very Difficult to hit. Its dart gun is equivalent in effect to the Stracher SS-7 (it runs the length of the unit's body). Its mandibles have a DPV=.1.

Price: Lv2000 Reload Price: As per weapon.

Cyberpunk: The centipede has an SP of 10 and an SDP of 6. The unit should be considered to have an REF of 9, an Attack skill of +4, and an Athletics skill of +6. The dart gun should be treated as a Hammer M-11 bolt pistol (see the *Near Orbit* sourcebook, page 26) and the mandibles treated as a knife.

Price: \$850 Reload Price: As per weapon.

CONSTITUTION ARMS

The independent American arms company Constitution Arms has released three specialized weapons, and a new ammunition type. These weapons are only available to U.S. government agencies and the military, but they will soon be available to licensed buyers. Constitution Arms has its headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts and may be contacted at Net-Fax #245-899-099. Only *Cyberpunk* statistics are given for Constitution Arms weapons.



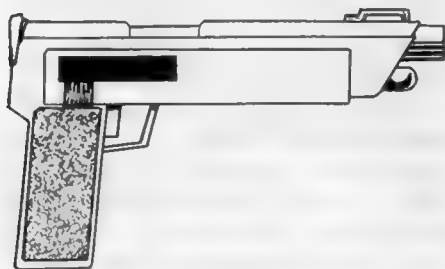
Vortex

The Vortex squad support weapon is the product of extensive research and testing. Earlier support weapons were found to be vulnerable to rusting, exces-

sive malfunction, and overheating. The Vortex solves all these problems as it has a simple firing mechanism and is composed of lightweight, strong ceramics. The weapon is chambered for the heavy 7.62mm NATO caseless round and has a 100-round drum magazine. The Vortex is in use with the U.S. Marine Corps and many police forces in areas with large populations of cybernetically enhanced citizens. Extensive field use has indicated that the weapon's high rate of fire, combined with the power of the 7.62mm round, makes the Vortex a devastating weapon—even against heavily armored and enhanced targets.

Predicted Retail Price: \$700-800.
Drum Cost: \$20-40 (unloaded).

Vortex, RIF, 1, N, P, 7.62N, 100, 35, VR.

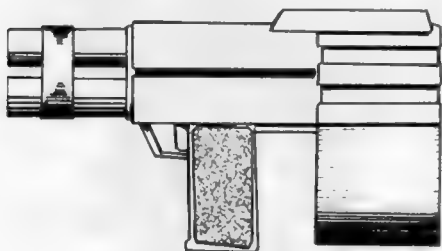


Cyber Elite Nine

The Cyber Elite Nine is a 9mm automatic pistol designed for elite U.S. military and law enforcement personnel. Each weapon is equipped for cybernetic interface. Each pistol is customized to the owner's hand and firing style, resulting in a +3 accuracy. However, in the hands of another person, the Cyber Elite Nine has only +1 accuracy.

Predicted Retail Price: \$1600 (including smartchipping and customizing).

Cyber Elite Nine, P, (3), J, R, 9mm, 15, 2, VR.



Whirlwind

The Whirlwind is a three-barreled, fully automatic, street fighting weapon. The three barrels are rotated to cool them and to increase the rate of fire. The weapon has two 20-round magazines and arm clamps to hold it steady when

firing. While the cybernetically enhanced can sometimes use the weapon one-handed, it is often equipped with a recoil stock (included) to make firing more manageable. The Whirlwind is used extensively by urban combat units and special police units, and is effective in close urban combat. As one psycho squad officer said, "It's like Lysol—one spray, and the scum dies." When fired without the recoil stock, the weapon is treated as firing "from the hip."

Predicted Retail Price: \$400+.

Whirlwind, SHG, 0, N, R, 12g, 40, 20, ST.

Penetrator Core Ammunition

PCA stands for penetrator core ammunition. PCA is a standard lead round with a rod-shaped core of tungsten, depleted uranium, or another armor-piercing substance. When the round hits the target, one of two things can happen: If the target is unarmored or lightly armored, the round will act like a standard round. If the target is heavily armored, the armor will stop the lead, but the penetrator core will continue through the armor and into the target. PCA is only produced in rifle calibers, but it can be produced for virtually any ammunition (except pellets). Treat PCA as normal or armor-piercing ammunition, whichever is more favorable. PCA is not commonly available and is not sold in stores. Some is available on the black market, but the police will not be happy if they find unauthorized personnel using it. Most PCA ammunition is sold to the U.S. military and special police units.

Black Market: \$40 plus per 50 rounds.

SENSE ENHANCE

Sense Enhance is an American cybernetics corporation that operates in the Midwest. It produces standard high-quality cyberoptics, cybervideo, and other sensory enhancement devices. In addition, it also produces unique products of its own. Sense Enhance is located in Columbus, Ohio and may be contacted by Net-Fax #007-678-903. Only *Cyberpunk* statistics are given for Sense Enhance equipment.

Third Eye

This is a cyberoptic option (at least one cyberoptic is required) that equips the eye with a special monitor device that enables the owner to "see" what the

remote optics are picking up. This option costs \$200 and has an HC of 2. The third eye also requires the owner to have at least one interface plug. There are two basic types of optic devices. The cheapest (\$35) consists of an optic, a fiber-optic cable, and an interface plug. The standard cable is 100 meters. Basically, the optic "sees" like a normal human eye (plus any options built into the optic) and transmits an image down the cable into a converter, then into the interface, and from there into the owner's cyberoptic, where the image is seen. The more expensive version (\$100) has a built-in transmitter and is linked to an interface receiver. The owner will see what the optic does by "tuning in" to the optic. The range is about five kilometers, but advanced (and more expensive) versions have longer ranges.

Third Ear

This is the audio version of the "third eye" and operates in a similar manner except with sound and the cyber audio. The cable "ear" costs \$25, and the transmitter version costs \$85. A character with a radio splice option can use this instead of an interface receiver. The option itself costs \$100 and has an HC=1.

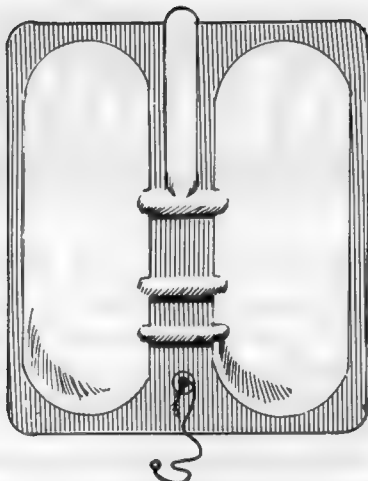


Combination

A person with both options may use combination units. An optic and microphone unit costs \$60, and the transmitter version costs \$170.

Switchboard

The switchboard is a large interface plug that comes in two versions. The \$100 model can handle four cable plugs and enables the owner to switch among them at will. The \$150 version can handle four transmitter units, and the owner can switch among them at will. Switchboards are often used by military sentries as well as corporate security personnel who move around and hence do not have constant access to a television monitor. In this case, the optics are the building cameras.



OXYGENATOR

An oxygenator is a small device consisting of a high-pressure cylinder of oxygen, a cylinder of a carbon dioxide-absorbing chemical, and a central com-

ponent that links these both to the person's pulmonary artery and allows blood to flow into and out of the unit. The device also has a sensor that monitors blood carbon dioxide and oxygen levels. Finally, an oxygenator has a link to the brain that informs a person of the chemical status of his blood and enables him to activate and deactivate the unit at will. Essentially, the device serves as an artificial lung for the person in situations in which the he does not have access to breathable air.

In both game systems this device enables the character to last approximately 30 minutes without oxygen or breathable air. (This duration can be modified by the user's degree of exertion, body size, etc., if you or your referee want to get into these details.) This

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device does not in any way provide the body with the ability to survive in a vacuum. Replacement/refill of the cylinders will require minor surgery unless the character opts to have two loading ports installed in his body. These allow replacement without surgery, but lack aesthetic appeal.

2300 AD: Price: Oxygenator: Lv600 Loading Ports: Lv100 Reloads: Lv20.

Cyberpunk: Price: Oxygenator: \$200, HC=1 Loading Ports: \$25, HC=1D6 Reloads: \$5. Ω



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Where Ya from, Mate?

Homeworld Determination for Australian Characters by C. W. Hess

This article is written as a follow up to "Where Ya from, Mack?" in **Challenge 42**. Both are designed to aid players and referees with a simple system for determining a character's homeworld based on nationality. The previous article was for American characters; this article determines homeworlds for Australian characters.

Using the system given in **2300 AD**, players choose a homeworld based on die rolls which determine whether they are from Core or Frontier worlds and what their world's gravity is. In this article, the process is a little different. First, players randomly determine their character's homeworld. The result then automatically determines the homeworld's gravity type and whether it is a Core or a Frontier world.

Not all players may wish to use this system, as it could cause some difficulties for their characters. For instance, if a harsh world such as King is rolled, the character will be forced to wear a respirator in normal atmospheres, and so on. This system may also assign characters to worlds they know little about. However, even with these possible drawbacks, this system supplies a challenging element of chance which may place a character's home at L-4, Botany Bay, Tirane, or somewhere in the Northern Territory back on Earth.

PROCEDURE

When a character is created, the first step is to determine the character's homeworld. Instead of using the Homeworld Table included in **2300 AD**, use the tables in this article. To begin with,

roll percentile dice and consult the Australian Homeworlds Table; this table will provide the name of the homeworld, whether it is a Core or a Frontier world, and its gravity type.

Certain results may require further explanation or additional rolls to complete the process. Information on Tirane (New Canberra), Botany Bay, Kingsland, and King may be found in **Colonial Atlas**. Little information is available concerning the Australian outposts at Ross 863 and New Melbourne.

Earth: The result "Earth" indicates that the character is from somewhere within the Australian continent, not including the area north of New Queensland, which is now part of the nation of Papua. The player has the option of rolling to determine the character's home territory. To do this, a roll of 1D100 should be made on the Earth-Australia Table. Additionally, the player also has the option of determining whether the character is from a rural or urban area.

King: All characters who come from King possess genetically modified bodies to survive in that hostile environment. The main result of these changes is that, aside from strength and dexterity modifiers when operating in non-high-G environments, the character must wear a respirator in normal atmospheres.

American World: The character was originally raised in American territory. This may be because one or both of the character's parents were American, because his parents were Australians who worked for an American firm, or simply because his parents were Australians who moved to America during the character's growing years. The result is that the character has had both American and Australian influences, although he is presently an Australian citizen. At the referee's option, the character may be assumed to have dual citizenship.

The system provided in the **2300 AD** rules may be used to determine the

Australian Homeworlds

World	Chance	Roll	Type	Gravity
Earth	10%	1-10	Core	Normal
Alpha Centauri,				
New Canberra	30%	11-40	Core	Normal
Botany Bay	25%	41-65	Frontier	Normal
King	9%	66-74	Frontier	High-G
Kingsland	12%	75-86	Frontier	Normal
New Melbourne*	1%	87	Frontier	Low-G
Ross 863*	1%	88	Frontier	Zero-G
L-4	1%	89	Core	Low-G
American world	7%	90-96	Varies	Varies
Other foreign world	4%	97-100	Varies	Varies

Over 95 percent of all Australians live on the Core worlds of Earth and Alpha Centauri. However, it is assumed that a much larger percentage of Core world inhabitants prefer the comforts of home to the challenges of the Frontier. So the Core world contribution to the total number of space-faring citizens has been reduced here to roughly 40 percent.

The chances for a character being from King have been similarly reduced as the inhabitants of that world have gone through certain biological changes to adapt to that world's harsh conditions. It is assumed here that this forces most inhabitants of King to stay on-planet, doing proportionately less interstellar travel than the inhabitants of other Australian colonies.

Earth-Australia

<i>Territory</i>	<i>Chance</i>	<i>Roll</i>	<i>Urban</i>
New South Wales	33%	1-33	57%
Victoria	28%	34-61	89%
New Queensland	14%	62-75	31%
South Australia	13%	76-88	44%
Western Australia	10%	89-98	12%
Northern Territory	2%	99-100	33%

The Urban column indicates the approximate percentage of inhabitants of the territory who live in an urban environment. To determine if a character is from an urban environment, simply make a percentile roll. If the result is less than or equal to the percentage indicated (treat 00 as 100), then the character is from an urban background. Otherwise, the character is from a rural background.

character's homeland. Alternatively, "Where Ya from, Mack?" provided a system for determining an American character's homeland.

Other Foreign World: The character is as described under American World but is from any non-Australian and non-American world. The system provided in the 2300 AD rules should be used to determine the homeland.

Asterisks: Any colony listed with an asterisk next to its name is an outpost

and is too small for any permanent settlers. Characters who receive this result were probably born at the colony listed but were then raised at a larger colony shortly afterward. The player rolling this result may wish to make a note of this, but should roll again.

URBAN AND RURAL CHARACTERS

Characters who come from urban backgrounds may purchase Core world

2300AD

skills as described in the 2300 AD rules. Characters from rural backgrounds instead may choose from the Core World Skills/Rural Characters list given below. Because rural characters are still influenced strongly by their Core world's urban society, they may purchase up to half their background skills from the Core world skills list given in the 2300 AD rules. However, the total number of skill points spent on Core world background skills may not exceed the total number of skill points spent on rural background skills. For ease of reference, the Core world skills from the 2300 AD rules are listed below under Core World Skills/Urban Characters.

Core World Skills/Rural Characters: Ground Vehicle, First Aid, Riding, Swim, Mechanical, Hunting, and Rifle (Combat Rifleman).

Core World Skills/Urban Characters: Computer, Ground Vehicle, Hover Vehicle, Sea Vehicle, Bureaucracy, and Information Gathering. Ω

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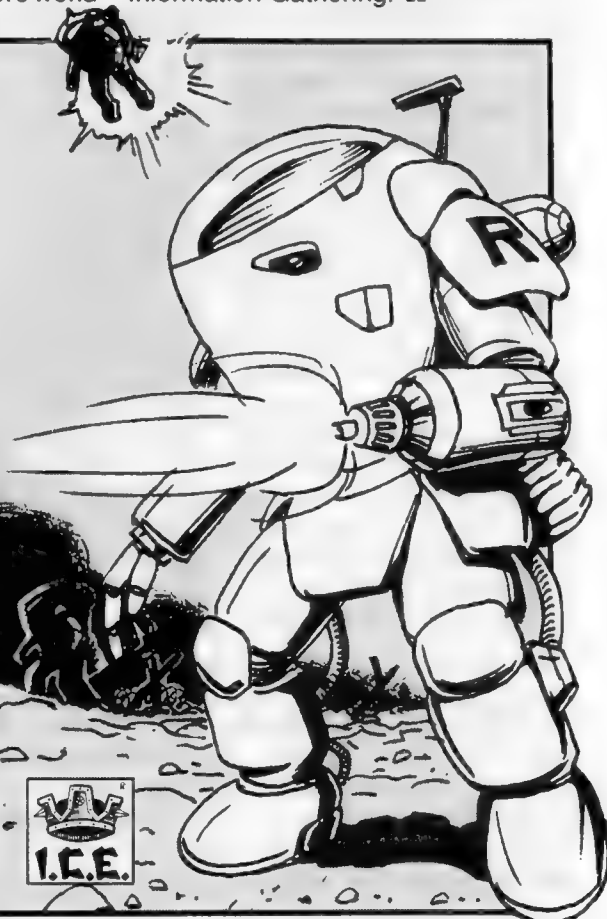
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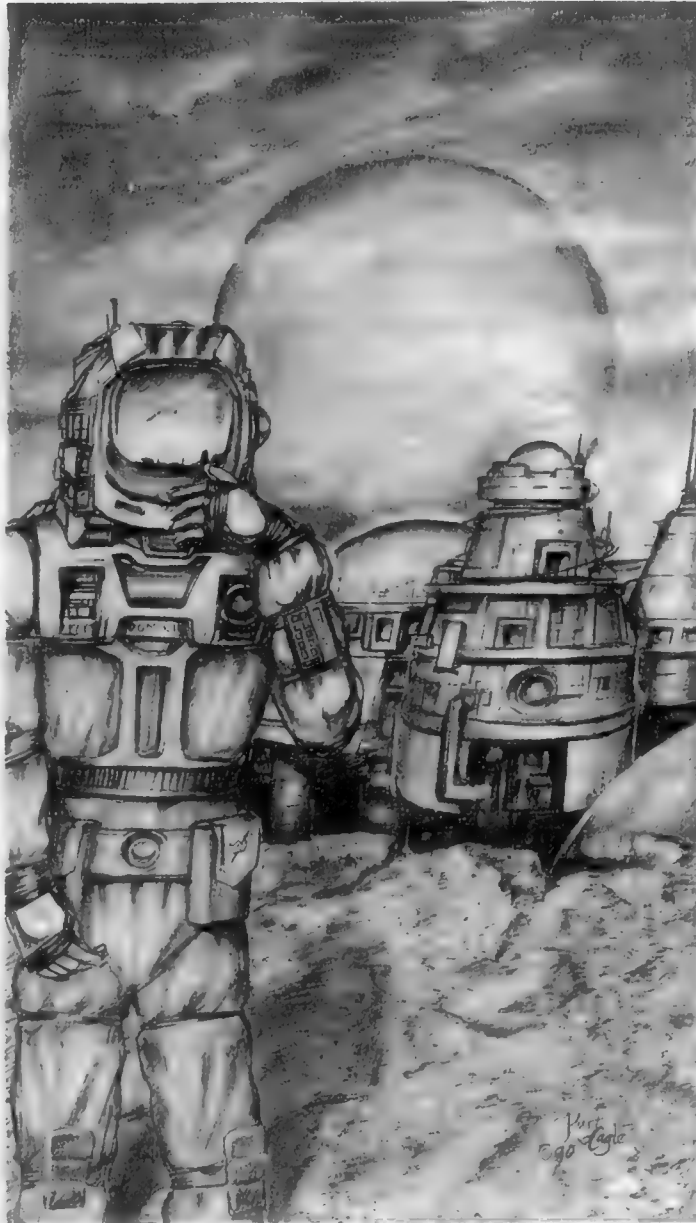
AMERICAN EXTRASOLAR COLONIZATION ADMINISTRATION

Clay Johanson

Stardrive development in the late-21st century ushered in a new age of colonization for Earth. As habitable worlds were discovered by probes and survey vessels, plans were speedily made in many nations to colonize these worlds—not only did colonization allow new access to mineral and agricultural resources, but it enhanced a nation's prestige as well.

The problem that plagued the colonization efforts of the mid- to late-22nd century was a matter of organization. Coordinating colonization efforts on numerous worlds was more than difficult: It was nearly impossible. Supplies were sent to the wrong destination (or were lost completely); urgently needed items were not available; and colonists were often unprepared or ill-equipped for the rigors of colonial life on the frontiers of space. Although massive amounts of time and money went into colonization, without coherent organization these valuable commodities were wasted.

All nations involved in colonization efforts developed agencies to handle the immense task of administering interstellar colonization. America was among these nations, and its colonization administration agency, the American Extrasolar Colonization Administration, was formed in 2172. In signing the Interstellar Colonization Act which created AECA, President Harrison Teague opened the door for an organization designed to "evaluate the suitability of habitable worlds for colonization, and to plan and coordinate all such colonization measures." AECA fell under the direct supervision of the president.



THE FIRST CENTURY

AECA's first years were spent on the development of systems designed to help coordinate the flow of information and supplies. Stockpiles of emergency supplies were established to ensure the availability of crucial goods for new colonies when they were formed. Contracts for the construction of fast courier ships were signed with the American Space Force. And AECA directors contracted with private corporations to supply essential materials. At the same time, guidelines for colonization procedures were established in conjunction with the North American Research League (NARL). All aspects of an environmental nature were covered by NARL's guidelines, especially those involving pollution.

The discovery of King in 2192 provided AECA with its first challenge. The massive planet posed many problems for AECA engineers: How could humans colonize King, with its immense gravity and crushing atmosphere? How could they breathe the sulfurous air? And how could they possibly recruit colonists to

live in what could only be called hell?

AECA acted quickly. The Medical Division coordinated the activities of researchers at the University of Toronto, the North Carolina Institute of Technology, and Johns Hopkins University, and developed the DNAM virus within only two years. Trilon Corporation provided a compact air scrubber to filter sulfur out of the air. And the president authorized large monetary incentives for colonists.

These efforts, and a brilliant public relations campaign

designed by AECA's Relations Division, allowed America to begin colonization of King in 2194. The colonists founded their colony at Mayflower on a site which had been prepared for them by American Space Force engineers working under the supervision of AECA. The New Columbia colony was off to a good start.

During the next 20 years, New Columbia grew steadily, despite low numbers of new colonists. Congress' decision in 2215 to send convicts to King was opposed by AECA, but the president supported congress, and AECA stood helplessly by while the colony ground to a halt. During the Tantalum Strike, AECA continued to provide material support to New Columbia, and when the strike was over, AECA resumed normal operations on King.

The colonization of Hermes began almost at the same time as the Tantalum Strike on King. AECA transported large amounts of farming equipment from Earth to Hermes at great expense, in the hope of establishing an agrarian colony on that world. Despite high morale and support from both Australia and the Alberta Farmers' Cooperative, the Hermes colony was never really productive. Hermes' arctic temperatures, barren ground, and a lack of permanent support facilities on the ground all conspired to make life difficult for Hermes' farmers.

The discovery of Ellis in 2220 provided AECA with yet another possible colony world. Unfortunately, AECA's directors felt that a dying desert world was no place to start another colony, especially since almost all of AECA's efforts were being spent on keeping the colony on Hermes alive. However, the Alberta Farmers' Cooperative's proposal to form an agricultural colony on Ellis finally won support at AECA. Engineers began construction of a colony site near one of Ellis' seas, and on July 17, 2229, the first settlers arrived at Liberty.

By 2245, Ellis was producing most of the food shipped along the American Arm, and Hermes was deep in an economic depression. In 2255, just as it seemed that the colony on Hermes was doomed to failure, two industrialists from Earth—Kim Silva and Jennifer Storher—announced their intentions to begin the Mule Corporation on Hermes. AECA provided the Mule Corporation with transportation and technical assistance for two years—until 2257, when the first vehicle rolled out of Mule's factory in the city of Hope.

2275 TO THE PRESENT

AECA's paramount role in the affairs of the American Arm has diminished somewhat over the past 25 years. With the granting of statehood to Ellis in 2276, AECA no longer administers that world, although it is still responsible for ensuring that new colonists arrive on a regular basis and for administering the Homestead Act.

AECA does, however, still administer King and Hermes. On King, things are moving along just as they always have. On Hermes, however, the AECA-appointed governor, Malcolm Durran, has been pressing to make Hermes the 51st state.

The various corporations on Hermes, especially Trilon Corporation, oppose this move, as they fear increased governmental regulation of their business activities. Although AECA has nothing to do with granting statehood to any colony,

Hermes' corporate sector has called for AECA to remove Durran from office.

AECA is now sponsoring the Lowe Act, an initiative which, if passed by Congress, would allow Indonesia, the Scandinavian Union, and New Zealand the opportunity to form their own colonies on Avalon (DM+51 2204 I) using American starships and technical support. If the act passes, these three nations could have colonies on Avalon by 2315.

ORGANIZATION

AECA is divided into five divisions, each of which is responsible for a different aspect of colonization.

Engineering Division: The EDiv is responsible for the design and construction of the colonies proper. On each of the American colony worlds, this involved preliminary surveying and laying out of the initial settlements. EDiv maintains bases of operation on Abernathy (King's largest moon), Boise in the Ellis system, and Chryse Planitia on Mars. Critical stockpiles of materials are stored at these bases for use in the event of an emergency.

Medical Division: Operating in conjunction with the Center for Disease Control at LaGrange-4, the MDiv is responsible for seeing that all colonists are properly inoculated before they emigrate. MDiv is also in charge of all preliminary testing of potential colony worlds for possibly virulent diseases.

Transportation Division: The TDiv operates the nearly 30 colonization vessels which transport colonists and cargo to the colony worlds. TDiv vessels may be found almost anywhere in the arm, delivering supplies and moving AECA personnel from one location to another. AECA's charter also allows the TDiv to commandeer any American nonmilitary vessel for its own use in the event of an emergency.

Relations Division: The RDiv is responsible for AECA's public relations and for attracting colonists. The current program involves an extensive ad campaign targeted at those who are tired of the hustle and bustle of modern America—those who want to "return to a simpler time." In recent years, fewer people have responded to RDiv's campaigns. RDiv is planning to offer monetary incentives in an effort to increase the number of emigrants.

The Advisory Council: The Advisory Council, known as "the administration," is the primary decision-making entity within AECA. The council consists of divisional administrators, AECA's scientific advisors, planetary governors, and several members of congress. The council is headed by a director, currently Dr. Katherine Lennox of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Advisory Council makes its headquarters in Annapolis, Maryland.

AECA'S SCOPE OF OPERATIONS

AECA employs nearly 75,000 employees, approximately half of whom are based at AECA's headquarters in Maryland. The remainder of AECA's personnel are divided among the American colony worlds (King, Hermes, Ellis, and, to some extent, Kie-Yuma), AECA's logistics bases (on Abernathy,

2300AD

Boise, and Mars), and AECA transport and courier ships. Small numbers of AECA scientists and engineers are operating in the DM+43 2796 branch of the American Arm, studying the three habitable worlds located there. For its own use, AECA owns and operates 28 *Conestoga*-class colonization vessels. These massive ships form the backbone of America's colonization fleet; in the past, the *Conestogas* have transported almost one million American colonists to their new homes among the stars. Also in operation are 10 *Ryder*-class courier vessels. These ships keep all of AECA in constant contact with both the administration and with each other.

King: AECA maintains a strong presence on King. Because of the importance of the tantalum industry to America, AECA keeps a close rein on the activities of the various mineralogical firms which operate in New Columbia. All the American firms are assigned an AECA field officer whose job is to monitor mineral claims and coordinate transportation of minerals, especially tantalum, to the orbital refineries.

Hermes: AECA is also a dominant force on Hermes. On Hermes, however, most of AECA's effort goes into the construction and maintenance of colony sites. The nature of the corporate sector on Hermes is such that AECA must do little to attract colonists; most on Hermes have been transferred there by their companies. Recently, AECA's focus has been on the development of a viable intercity transportation net to connect Hope, Burgess, and Grey Hill.

Ellis: AECA no longer administers Ellis—since it became a state in 2276, America's most distant colony world has managed most of its own affairs. AECA is still responsible for the transportation of new settlers to Ellis, however, since in the eyes of congress, Ellis is still a colony world.

ADVENTURES WITH AECA

Because of its research program on the DM+43 2796

subarm, AECA is interested in persons with exploration, military, and/or scientific skills. Many positions are available to qualified personnel who apply at a local AECA office, and pay is consistent with American federal standards (that is, pay is very good). The risks are also high.

Although the PCs will not be the first to visit these worlds, they will often be the first to spend any length of time there. New dangers, some unlike any ever encountered, await the unwary.

Several projects are underway along the American Arm.

Highland: Discovered by the American Space Force in 2267, Highland is considered by many in AECA to be prime territory. With its temperate climate and fertile soil, Highland would make an ideal colony if not for one thing: the ravvers.

These native life forms are one of the most vicious and dangerous life forms ever encountered by man, and large numbers of them infest all of Highland's major landmasses. Adventurers may be asked to search for a means to neutralize these creatures so that colonization might begin.

Avalon: This mysterious, clouded world located in the DM+51 2402 system is another potential colony world. It is most notable for its abundance of petrochemicals.

Alighieri: This fiery world quickly attracted the attention of AECA. Despite the tremendous mineral wealth of King, America's first colony world, Alighieri's almost normal gravity and lower temperatures make this mineral-laden world seem inviting. The player characters may be asked to perform a survey of Alighieri's surface to search for possible colony sites.

The Beta Aquilae Sector: While exploration of this region is only in the preliminary stages, AECA hopes to begin evaluation of worlds in this area of space within the next 10 years. It is believed that several habitable worlds may be located in this sector. Ω

Feedback Results for Challenge 41

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CHALLENGE *Conventions*

GUILD FEST '90, March 17-18 at the State University of New York in Binghamton. Events will include *Cyberpunk*, *Spelljammer*, *Car Wars* (or *GURPS Autoduel*), *Paranoia*, *AD&D*, and many others. For more information, write to Gamers' Guild, c/o Suny Binghamton, Box 2000, Binghamton, NY 13901.

EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN '90, March 24-25 at the Southern Illinois University Student Center in Carbondale. This convention offers a variety of events, including an RPGA *AD&D* tournament, miniatures judging, and a games auction. For more information, send a legal-sized SASE to SIU Strategic Games Society, Office of Student Development, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-4425, or call John P. Hulst at (618) 457-8846.

GAMES FAIR '90, March 30-April 1, at Reading University. The convention includes an advanced *AD&D* tournament and *AD&D* game team competition, quizzes, trade stands, competitions, demonstration games, and playtesting. Enjoy nonstop, 24-hour gaming with *D&D*, *AD&D*, *Marvel Super Heroes*, *Top Secret/S.I.*, *En Garde*, *Paranoia*, *Runequest*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Traveller*, *Stormbringer*, *Star Trek*, *Railway Rivals*, *Warhammer Battles*, *WFRP*, *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *MERP*, and more. For more information, contact TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, CB1 3LB UNITED KINGDOM.

CONNCON '90, March 31-April 1 at the Ramada Inn in Canbury, CT. Guest of honor will be Jean Rabe, RPGA Network coordinator. It will include masters and grandmasters level events, a three-round tournament, a members-only event, a benefit event, plus costume and miniatures painting contests, and seminars on gaming, gamemastering, and scenario design. Send a SASE to ConnCon, PO Box 444, Sherman, CT 06784.

UBCON '90, April 20-22 at the State University of New York (Amherst north campus) in Buffalo. Sponsored by the

UB Strategic and Role Playing Association, UBCon '90 will feature an *AD&D* tournament, plus other strategy and role-playing games, as well as a dealer room, movie room, and auction. For more information, contact Martin Szinger, UB/SaRPA Convention Director, 210 Curtis Pkwy, Buffalo, NY 14223, or call (716) 833-4610.

JAXCON SOUTH '90, April 20-22 at the downtown Civic Auditorium in Jacksonville, FL, sponsored by the Cowford Dragoons. Games scheduled include *Civilization*, *Ghostbusters*, *Seekrieg*, *Napoleonics* miniatures, *BattleTech*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *WRG*, *AD&D*, *Illuminati*, **Space: 1889**, *Sniper*, *Traveller*, *Element Masters*, *Warhammer 40,000*, *Robotech*, *Star Wars*, *Micro-Armor*, and others. Guests of honor will include Rich Sartore, designer of *Seekrieg*. Contact Jaxcon South '90, PO Box 4423, Jacksonville, FL 32201.

CAMPAIGN '90, May 12-13 at the Woughton campus, Milton Keynes, ENGLAND. Entries are being accepted in the U.K. science-fiction/fantasy championship in the following categories: *Warhammer III* fantasy battle, *Warhammer 40,000 Rogue Trader*, and *Blood Bowl*. Write to Campaign '90, 117 St. Johns Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK3 5DZ ENGLAND.

GLATHRICON '90, June 8-10 in Evansville, IN, sponsored by the Evansville Gaming Guild. Guests of honor will include Steve Jackson of Steve Jackson Games, artist Lucy Synk, DM Skip Williams, and RPGA network coordinator Jean Rabe. RPGA tournaments will include *AD&D* feature, masters, gamemasters and Joe Martin Benefit, *Marvel* feature and masters, *GURPS*, *James Bond*, *Paranoia*, *Paranoia* masters, *Chill*, *DC Heroes*, *Champions*, *Star Trek*, and others. The 7th annual Glathricon also offers a dealers' room, art show, print shop, art auction, masquerade, miniatures painting contest, seminars and panels. For more information, write to Evansville Gaming Guild, PO Box 15414, Evansville, IN 47716, or call (812) 477-9508.

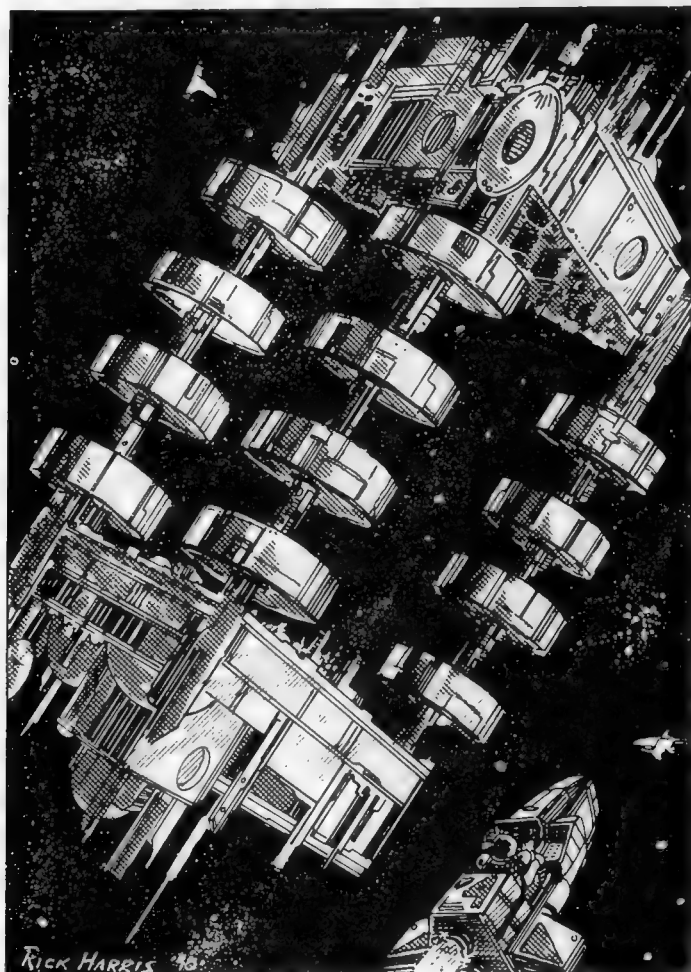
MICHICON GAMEFEST '90, June 10-12 in the Southfield Civic Center in Southfield, MI (the first suburb north of Detroit). Sixty boardgame events, 60 miniatures events, and 50 role-playing events are scheduled, plus three used-game auctions and open gaming. For more information, contact Metro Detroit Gamers, Box 656, Wyandotte, MI 48192.

ORIGINS '90, June 28-July 1 at the Atlanta Hilton and Towers, Atlanta, GA. Experience four continuous days of round-the-clock board, computer, miniatures, and role-playing gaming. Also includes game panels, seminars, discussions, demonstrations, all-night open gaming, fantasy art show, four-day auction, costume contest, and exhibit hall. Featured guests will include Tom Clancy, Larry Bond, David Drake, Janet and Chris Morris, Jerry and Sharon Ahern, and many more. For more information, write to Origins '90, Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362, or call (404) 457-2490.

GENCON '90, August 9-12 at the MECCA Convention Center in Milwaukee, WI. Play in hundreds of adventure games, role-playing games, and the world's largest role-playing tournament—the *AD&D* Open. More than 40 national games tournaments and tons of events will be sponsored by the RPGA Network and major manufacturers. Enjoy a huge strategy and historical miniatures gaming area. Match your wits and pit your strategies against your foes. Don't miss your chance to play against the fierce competition found in the highly acclaimed world boardgaming championships. Plus a fantasy art show, 150 exhibit areas, games and art auctions, a computer gaming area, world-class games seminars, demonstrations and workshops. For more information, write to the 1990 GenCon Game Fair Headquarters, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Announcements should be sent in at least four months before a convention takes place. Write to **Challenge**, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA.

L-5: Community in the Sky



Three slender spindles, each 5 kilometers long, joined by equilateral triangular platforms 1.5 kilometers long—it's spectacular.

Pete Rogan

At the close of the 23rd century, equidistant from the Earth and moon lies an old and immense structure with a very simple name: L-5. Founded by the ESA in 2061 and expanded three times in the 239 years since, it is not so much a space station as it is a city—a city of nearly 50,000 inhabitants from 37 nations, fully self-supporting, prosperous from trade and its own industries, and possessed of a culture and character all its own.

Its appearance is spectacular. Three slender spindles, each five kilometers long, are joined by equilateral triangular platforms a kilometer and a half on a side. On each spindle turn four great wheels, each a kilometer in diameter. The wheels turn slowly but endlessly; the platforms jut with docking armatures, antennae, cranes, and towers. Space for 100 kilometers around L-5 is crowded with ships, shuttles and

solar collectors up to 100 hectares in area. Although perhaps not as impressive a feat of engineering as Gateway and the beanstalk, L-5 is a marvel, nonetheless.

And with its immense population, trans-European rivalries, and cyberpunk underground, L-5 is an ideal site for a near-Earth encounter or campaign for 2300 AD.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

In the 21st century, the European Space Agency powers—Britain, France and others—took note of the vast losses the world had suffered in its natural resources and began planning to replace them. The most expensive option also offered the largest potential returns: exploitation of the moon and the asteroid belts. Metals and light fuels, particularly hydrogen, could be easily extracted from these sources, and large solar energy collectors near Earth could supplement dwindling petroleum reserves.

The expense could be lessened if the actual lifting of mining and processing machinery, people, and vehicles could be held to a minimum. That meant space-based smelting and manufacturing facilities, and *that* meant a space station. The ideal facility would house 200 to 500 people, be located far enough from the Earth to limit the transit costs of asteroid-bound ships, and yet remain close enough to make “downstream” traffic flow economical and give access to planned manufacturing bases on the moon. The ideal place was L-5, 400 million kilometers from Earth and the moon and, by a quirk of planetary geometry, slightly cheaper to reach than L-4 from the moon.

Code-named Project Diana, after the Greek deity of the moon, the ambitious undertaking involved a great deal of planning, and the first module was not launched until after the Americans placed their own facility at L-4. From the first, however, Project Diana was intended to be much more than a mere research station. Even before all its life-support sections were built, Diana (as the station was known then) was building power satellites and orbital factories in sections for construction in low Earth orbit (LEO) and was beginning work on other space habitats in cislunar space. It took the lunar mines and construction bases 15 years to finish Diana. When they did, their production was, as intended, shifted to building power satellite components; there was never a wasted motion.

The first L-5 complex was a single wheel on a single spindle, deliberately built larger than necessary to accommodate expected growth. A kilometer in diameter, the wheel was built with three decks with a total floor area of 785,000 square meters, rotating to produce Earth-normal gravity conditions on the middle deck. At one end of the kilometer-long spindle was the fusion power plant; at the other end were extensive docks and construction yards. The ESA complement aboard, including dependents, stood at 514 on June 1, 2074, when Diana was officially declared completed. Room and life support existed for nearly 6000, a number thought astronomi-

cally and comfortably huge. Emigration was strictly controlled then, and non-ESA personnel had to post enormous transportation bonds. The most pessimistic projections indicated expansion would be necessary no sooner than 2150 at the earliest. This turned out to be rather short-sighted.

First Expansion: Six years after Diana's completion, Dr. Jerome induced the effect that bears his name, and many space powers realized that practical starships could be less than a generation away. In 2099, Diana's 25th anniversary, the Melbourne Accords were signed, providing demilitarization of certain orbits around Earth and classifying power satellites as civilian targets. All the ESA powers refused to sign since armed vessels were also being produced at L-5, and no alternate facilities existed elsewhere at the time for the ESA powers' use—and likewise since Diana gave every ESA nation a virtually impregnable high ground from which to guard or threaten lunar yards, orbital power stations, and LEOs alike. To enhance their advantage—and to prepare for the coming jump to interstellar travel and exploration—ESA laid plans to radically expand the L-5 station.

These plans, finalized in 2106, called for three more wheels to be built, each a mate to Diana. They were to be called Marianne, Walkure, and Ntozake, and they were to be allocated to France, Bavaria, and Azania, respectively. This was the beginning of an unfortunate policy of nationalization of the wheels, which the growth of multinational and multiplanet corporations did not mitigate. With the stars beckoning, many people were eager not to see their nations fall behind in the race, and many more people were reluctant to lose ESA's cohesion over something as small as the names on space station wheels. L-5, as it was becoming more commonly known, had only a single administrator, at any rate, who was chartered to be chosen from the members of a council drawn from the populace of each wheel. No limits were to be imposed on where immigrants could live (provided they worked for ESA or posted the bond). Both of these provisions were thought to be reasonable and comprehensive safeguards against the "ghettoization" of L-5. That they proved ineffectual should not detract from the original care and concern of the planners.

Construction of the second stage of L-5 (the first expansion) began April 20, 2107, and continued, with occasional lapses in construction due to the high costs involved, until 2131. Many debates arose in all the ESA nations over the need for so large, expensive, and possibly nonself-supporting an expansion, but in the end there was little choice but to continue construction and try to recoup the investment in money and prestige.

These were dark days for L-5, plagued as it was with an uncertain economy dependent on the boom-and-bust cycles of asteroid and lunar mining and flighty Earthside financing. The economic problems were made worse by the encroachment of regionalism. As each new wheel was built—even if only the tag-ends of the spokes were completed—immigrants piled in from Diana, usually all of a particular nationality or language group. Multinational corporations were invited to invest in wheel construction for trade or space concessions, with the hope that transnational communities would be the result. But the multinationals, to save cost, recruited from the locals, for the most part. And when they did hire a few new

people, they were only 37 percent likely (according to the ESA study from 2130) to live among people not of their ethnic or linguistic background.

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This is not to say that the wheels were all composed of one group of people, but each wheel did have a predominant ethnic flavor with a leavening (never more than a third of the total population) of other ethnic, national, or corporate groups. The 2130 study found, for instance, that Marianne at completion had a population whose loyalties were 67 percent French, 14 percent British or Canadian, 13 percent Altamira Combine (later absorbed into Eurospace, itself later absorbed into Trilon), four percent Manchurian, and two percent Indonesian. Time has reduced the absolute value of such nationalism, but the ethnic flavors of the wheels remain to this day.

Second Expansion: The Second Age of Exploration's second extrasolar phase (2140 to 2200) vindicated the ambitious first expansion. For the first time, L-5's industry took a leading position in the construction of space vessels, particularly starships, and once again its population grew. Even the shock of the Alpha Centauri War in 2162 did not appreciably diminish its growth; when the ESA powers finally signed the Melbourne Accords in 2163 and demilitarized L-5, the habitat's resources were used to construct military yards farther away from Earth. It has been argued in some academic circles that the removal of military influence over L-5's industrial resources contributed to the lessening of the nationalistic rivalries; but this is debatable, as by this time L-5's "nationalist" factions were already culturally quite distinct from their ostensible homelands and no less contentious for all that.

By the turn of the century, L-5 was prosperous, peaceful, and getting crowded with more than 10,000 people in its four wheels. The flow of goods from the out-system colonies was continuing, and the prospects for growth were improving. The result of all these factors was the joint ESA/L-5 Council of 2201 and plans for the second expansion. The space habitat was to more than double in size with the construction of a second spindle with four additional wheels—Godfrey, Frankowski, Iverson and Juarez (the names of explorers and colonial leaders of the 22nd century)—and the addition of two large docking and shipyard facilities each over a kilometer long to connect the two spindles. The completion date was to be 2231, the centennial of the first expansion. But construction went ahead of schedule, and the expansion was finished in 2220.

Not that there weren't problems. For one thing, L-5's sheer size and economic importance to Earth forced ESA to come to a new political understanding with its gateway to space. The year after the second expansion's completion, President Sowtay Ramachuk wrested from ESA a concession of L-5's full rights to its own economic self-determination. The Ramachuk Declaration established a unique independence for the space habitat; in return for self-determination, L-5 agreed to pay a set annual fee to the ESA as reimbursement

for the second expansion costs. These payments were to continue to 2271, but later events intervened.

Criminals Invade: The growth of L-5 also produced a hefty and profitable trade in smuggling. The large transportation bonds which had previously prevented emigration of large numbers of people were lifted, bringing new settlers in from many colonies and space habitats, and some even from outside the solar system.

Most settlers were honest, hard-working people, but a few were criminals, fugitives, smugglers and pirates who saw an opportunity to use L-5 as a base of operations. They brought with them, ironically, a short-lived prosperity even greater than that enjoyed by L-5 in its heyday, and established the roots of a permanent underground that has never completely disappeared.

The Orbital Quarantine Command finally provided the impetus to dislodge the more brazen and public of the smugglers with a well-timed police effort and media blitz. July 2, 2259—the very end of the “Roaring Fifties,” the decade of greatest criminal activity—OQC released a report of a deadly alien bacillus that had been detected in a drug shipment smuggled in from off-Earth only as it was about to go down from an LEO in a dead glider. The public raised a tremendous outcry and demanded that the smugglers be stopped. The trail led back to a consortium of major drug figures in L-5. After a lengthy investigation and series of trials, the Six Kings, as the chief smugglers called themselves, were convicted and deported. The L-5 Council adopted a tougher series of antismuggling laws, and order was imposed and maintained—even after the alien bacillus was revealed to be an OQC hoax.

Third Expansion: By the third expansion, L-5 was experiencing new, two-pronged difficulties. Two spindles turned out to be an insufficiently modeled engineering feat; complicated oscillations had developed in the dual structure that it was not designed to absorb. The entire habitat was not just unstable and prone to several different kinds of vibrations, but it was starting to make the inhabitants physically sick. They were being afflicted with the so-called “slow-motion sickness,” a complicated physiological problem brought on by these almost undetectable oscillations. The solution lay in building a stabilizing addition to L-5, but therein lay a second major problem.

Paradoxically, as humanity increased its holdings among the stars, its near-Earth facilities diminished in their importance to this effort. Habitats closer to the frontier did more of the manufacturing of high-profit items like drugs and fabricated materials. Trade was still increasing, but the rapid growth of the first half of the 23rd century was obviously at an end. Simply stated, it was going to be difficult for L-5 to generate the funds necessary to produce a third expansion on its own, and yet it had to expand to cease the vibration problems and retain its share of trans-Earth trade.

The L-5 Council and President Barthes decided to expand anyway in 2264. Plans were readily drawn up within a year. But even before that, Barthes carefully engineered an elaborate refinancing of both the third and the second expansions with ESA, a consortium of major Earth banks, and ambitious corporations and private developers. Under the terms of the Houston Concord, L-5 would have an additional 30 years—

until 2301—to pay off its debt. In that time, with plenty of bonus provisions for early completion, the developers were to expand L-5 to three spindles with 12 wheels, and dramatically enlarge its port capability—up to 60 ships a day would be able to dock there, exclusive of lunar and interface vehicles. The planners felt this to be a large enough capacity for another half-century of growth. But again, events intervened.

The third spindle, with the wheels Shi'at, Cousonne, Xangxi, and Belsen, named for four of L-5's most prominent presidents, was completed ahead of schedule in 2274. Tragically, just a week before the dedication ceremony, Sowtay Ramachuk died suddenly; a mourning L-5 speedily renamed Belsen to Ramachuk.

Maturity: Barthes' vision paid off for L-5 in the last quarter of the 23rd century. The modern interstellar trade network between the arms made Earth one of the two major nexuses where goods were processed and transported. L-5, already a major starport, became the gateway to Earth and Europe, and the builder of 72 percent of all ship tonnage in Earth orbit.

With the increased volume of trade from the Chinese Arm and the influx of Cantonese and Mandarin corporations and personnel, L-5 consolidated its economic stability as never before. Prosperity brought with it a flowering of the arts, particularly of music and drama, flavored with touches of all the worlds in human space. When Xiang tone-poems came to Earth, they first played L-5.

Prosperity also brought crime, which, though never as open and violent as in the 2250s, was decidedly more profitable than it was in the '50s. Organized crime on L-5 takes the form of smuggling, money laundering, and a certain amount of discreet fencing. Earth finds it hard to believe that piracy can exist in the modern era and would be shocked to learn how much cargo lost in the French Arm turns up in the Chinese Arm, and vice versa. No armed ships can be based at L-5, of course, but many criminal bosses lead comfortable lives here, protected from scrutiny by quite plausible legitimate businesses. Some are even corporate executives whose firms are unaware of their extracurricular activities.

The ESA became alarmed by this prosperity in 2280 when the Adelman Survey revealed that besides having a decided export imbalance (shipping out more, in value, than it was taking in), L-5 was shipping fully 85 percent of all its goods and services to nonterrestrial destinations, including 60 percent of all native production. In short, less and less L-5 trade was being done with Earth, and the trend was accelerating. The survey results did much to compel France to build a beanstalk to help adjust this trend.

The Beanstalk Era and the Future: With the completion of Gateway there seems little doubt that within 20 years L-5's growth will again compel a fourth expansion. A fourth spindle will mean not only more living room (for up to 120,000 people) but also a greater proportional increase in available docking space. Adding four more wheels will increase population by only 33 percent, but building up the endplates to hold a fourth spindle will double L-5's ship-handling capability to 120 ships a day.

Before that time, OQC will have to radically increase its ability to police all of L-5's increased trans-Earth traffic, probably by increasing the number of inspectors. Gateway

is presently a more pressing concern, but as trade increases in volume, OQC will need a new front line farther out in space. When that happens, a new kind of frontier will expand into space. Whether L-5 resists or cooperates with this expansion remains to be seen; beyond this point, all projections are useless.

STRUCTURE AND POPULATION

L-5 consists of four major parts: the two docking triangles, the three spindles at each corner of the triangles, the 12 wheels on those spindles (which together comprise the main habitat), and the host of smaller, free-floating structures that form a halo about the main habitat.

Main Habitat: The two docking triangles—with their maze of gantries, loading tubes, control towers, communications and power reception antennae, and auxiliary craft hangars—are impossibly complex in appearance. The same is true of the maze of service and personnel corridors that link all the habitable portions. Passengers taking the high-speed elevators to the spindles, of course, only catch a glimpse of these. Few would guess that beyond their capsules and tubes lie construction yards and fabrication facilities capable of building a complete starship, over 200 private and public shuttles serving LEOs, lunar stations and other orbital habitats, or such wonders as three complete and independent hospitals, each in a spin habitat buried in the maze.

Each triangle is a complete port, with nearly identical administrative organizations and work forces of roughly 5000 each. Port Alvarez lies at the alpha end of L-5 and Port Lemanac at the omega end. Strangely, there is no sense of competition between the two ports at any level. The proximity of hard vacuum and massive, powerful machinery leaves no room in port workers' minds for anything less serious than safety and survival.

Connecting the two triangles and serving as hubs for the wheels are the three spindles. Visitors are often surprised to learn that the spindles are used as work space and are not simply empty conduit-bearing transit tubes. Around each spindle is a sleeve of workshops, storage holds and other specialized chambers providing L-5 with zero-G pressurized space close at hand. The spindles contain four separate tramways connecting the wheel hubs, service tubes or flyways containing handholds for manual transport between wheels, and a limited number of backup connections for life support and power transmission.

The 12 wheels are the heart of L-5. Each is an independently functioning life-support system. Should one or two fail, the rest of L-5 would not be threatened, and the remaining systems could even sustain the load of two dead wheels virtually indefinitely. No such failure has ever occurred, fortunately. Though each wheel is outwardly identical to every other—with three decks, a diameter of one kilometer and a width of 200 meters—each but the newest has been extensively modified and rebuilt within. Each also has its own distinctive ethnic and cultural flavor, described below.

Diana: On Earth, 239 years would lend a structure a certain age and solidity. In a space habitat like L-5, age means three refits and certain structural peculiarities—like spiral stairways, an open two-deck park space, and quaint interior trim. Diana's proximity to Port Alvarez and its heavily British population

has made it greatly resemble a pressurized London underground, complete with a tradition of exotic underground music from clubs like Banger's Up and Scowcroft's.

Marianne: Old France in orbit, Marianne's French-speaking people are known for their freewheeling hospitality and unique cuisine. The largest and richest French trading companies have their offices here, in spite of the high rent. A sizeable Cantonese minority on A deck, closest to the hub, represents Canton's trading ventures, especially those that serve worlds in the French Arm.

Walkure: Once almost entirely Bavarian, Walkure became multinational early in the 23rd century and stayed that way until recently when German reunification prompted a large-scale resettlement effort. As a result, the older Ukrainian, Indonesian, Incan and Arabian neighborhoods have been bought up, and reconstruction has made most of them disappear. Some of the more archaic and maze-like parts still survive, however, and so does the stubborn German-speaking underculture that lives there—members call themselves "Stahlsingers." Walkure is thus a combination of the ultra-modern and the shadowy and dangerous.

Ntozake: The so-called "African wheel" (sometimes insultingly called the "African Arm") was built to accommodate the Azanians. Like the Bavarians in Walkure at a later date, the Azanians leased out portions of their wheel to other allies and minor powers needing access to space, notably the Nigerians and Mozambiquans, so Ntozake acquired early on an international and intercultural flavor—one at some odds with the European wheels. Though the composition has changed over the years, Ntozake is still quintessentially African. English and French are spoken here, but full acceptance at all levels of the culture is possible only for those speaking Bantu, Xhosa, or Arabic. At least one powerful smuggling cartel is rumored to be based here, adjacent to Port Lemanac.

Godfrey: This wheel was scarcely begun when the Manchurians began leasing space in it, despite the then-prohibitive price. Manchurian and Chinese interests, including some corporations which have now moved out of the solar system, settled here. Godfrey is roughly 80 percent Manchurian and Chinese, with a Canadian minority mostly employed by Solar Shipping. A large number of Xiang and Xiang-inspired artworks pass through or originate in Godfrey, and the rooms and corridors reflect a strong alien art influence.

Frankowski: The Ukrainians were quick to spread to new quarters out of Walkure, and have made Frankowski a home away from home. The Melbourne Accords make it impossible for military vessels to be based or even supplied from here, but a large quantity of space-bound and Earth-bound Ukrainian freight, some to military bases elsewhere, does go through L-5. A number of other Slavic nations or organizations, notably Poland's Zapamoga, maintain offices here. At present there is a quiet struggle for space going on between the Ukraine and the Incan Republic, a newcomer from Juarez.

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Iverson: Eurospace, a private consortium of industrial interests from ESA nations, made a deliberate attempt to form a "nationless," purely corporate neighborhood, and came quite close to succeeding here. Unfortunately, Eurospace was unable to break up language enclaves even after splitting up housing allocations and gave the effort up in 2254. By this time Iverson had a decidedly unique motley flavor, and it was this that drew the UAR to establish its own space-based settlement soon after. Trilon eventually absorbed Eurospace and wound up hiring the bulk of Iverson's labor—European, Arabian, or whatever—for its Port Lemanac activities.

Juarez: Brazil bought into Juarez quite early and used it and Port Lemanac as a springboard for deep-space exploration. Argentinian domination of much of southern South America made it difficult for the Brazilians to find and encourage other worthy Hispanic nations to join it. But when the Incan Republic broke free of Argentina, that dramatically changed. Now Incan Republic corporate interests dominate 48 percent of Juarez. To preserve relations with their Portuguese-speaking allies (including Portugal, whose space-trading authority is now located here), the Incans began looking for space elsewhere in L-5. The gateway to the Latin Finger, Juarez may end up giving its Incan Republic settlers an entire wheel of their own at the next expansion.

Shi'at: Arabia and the Life Foundation consolidated their L-5 holdings next to Port Alvarez and cemented a long-standing friendship. A number of Middle Eastern and southern Asian interests have settled people here, including the UAR, and Rebco established an office in Shi'at to serve the Chinese Arm. Arabic is the preferred language, but English is probably the one most commonly used. By convention, Shi'at keeps Riyadh time, and muezzins call the faithful to prayer five times daily. (In a spaceborne structure, one may choose the appropriate direction to Mecca, according to Islamic law, if the exact direction is not known.)

Cousonne: L'Institut des Études Xénologiques and a host of French corporations and affiliated minor organizations settled into this wheel and caused a minor furor among the British, who claimed a second French wheel was being established. The upset didn't end until the Royal Society also gained quarters here. Since that time a number of other foundations have settled into Cousonne, including the Astronomischen Reichen-Institut. This concentration of intellectuals has produced a kind of college town atmosphere, complete with a wide range of college insignia on every surface and even on the people.

Xangxi: For many years, the Look Upwards Combine, a Cantonese group of research foundations and industrial companies, pressed the L-5 Council for a wheel of its own, apart from the Manchurians—and finally got it in 2270. As rapid as their growth has been, the Cantonese interests have also allowed some Chinese, the Alberta Farmer's Cooperative, the Academia dei Lincei, and Ferrantino, an enclave of Italian starship designers, to take up residence.

With the population split between engineers, agriculturalists and visionaries speaking two dialects of Chinese and three kinds of Italian, Xangxi's culture has a somewhat schizophrenic cast to it. As one former council member from this wheel put it, "To live on Xangxi one must either be crazy or wish to become so."

Ramachuk: The L-5 Council took advantage of the third expansion to consolidate all its offices and workers into a single habitat. As large as the administration was, there was still room for the Foundation for Practical Knowledge, denied a space in Cousonne, to settle here. Ramachuk is the usual first destination for diplomats and government officials, as well as important transient executives, coming to L-5. It is habitually gleaming and spotless, unfailingly modern to a fault. Cultural icons and distinctions are actively suppressed in this wheel, the heart of L-5's government, to avoid a chaotic or provincial appearance. Nowhere else on L-5 is it easier to think of L-5 as a big space station.

The Halo: L-5 is not a single structure. Its main habitat is unitary, unlike the multinational habitat at L-4, but surrounding this habitat are several hundred auxiliary and support habitats and structures of several major types.

Most important are the power satellites—immense grids of solar cells and transmitters that produce most of L-5's power. Early plans for Diana included solar power as a backup to the integral fusion plant, but concerns about radioactivity, waste disposal, and public image forced L-5 to rely completely on the satellite grid after the first expansion. After all, one of Diana's purposes was to demonstrate the viability of solar power on Earth, and it made little sense to rely on fusion power when there was abundant sunlight waiting to be harvested. The reliability factor was also irresistible; unlike a single fusion plant or even a network of them, the solar grid cannot go down completely. And even if portions of it do, no one is endangered.

Manufacturing plants of various sizes, about half of them manned, are the next most valuable class of free structures. Utilizing vacuum, microgravity and proximity to port facilities, these factories produce a surprising range and quantity of semiprocessed and finished goods from pharmaceuticals and cloth to logic circuits and genetically engineered biodevices.

At one time, the next most important class of structures was considered to be first in importance and L-5's unofficial reason for being—laboratories. In 2300, separate laboratory and experimental facilities are used only because of their proximity to Earth. Experiments and trial manufacturing requiring freedom from radio and gravitic interference must be conducted elsewhere.

In fact, a large proportion of the old laboratory facilities have been converted to highly desirable storage space—they are now warehouses. Not a few have also been converted into private residences by the very wealthy—nearly ultimate privacy for nearly ultimate cost.

And, of course, the final components of the halo are all the hundreds of starships, shuttles, work modules and other craft arriving, departing, or simply sailing between L-5 and all other points in space, near and far.

LIFE ABOARD L-5

Until the third expansion, the majority of L-5's population was transient. Employees of one or another of the corporations leasing space, of ESA or of the station authority itself, would regularly sign on for duty of several years, then return home to Earth. Not until the 23rd century did residents stay permanently, and even then they were in a minority. The majority, in fact, became more mobile, and entire families grew

up living in space habitats, shuttling from one to another as they followed career paths.

The continual changeover of population, plus the semi-isolated nature of each wheel, is responsible for the wide cultural variation aboard L-5. Broadly put, while L-5 is a single structure, in reality it is 12 distinct districts, each split into three or more neighborhoods. Early residents preferred the company of people who spoke their birth language, even if they remained strangers to each other. Neighborhoods lived on even after people moved away; they had a solid sense of continuity to them, and, save for the occasional voluntary relocation, no L-5 neighborhood has ever completely disappeared.

ESA intended that L-5, when it grew large enough, have a representative form of government, and this tradition holds. Each wheel holds a yearly congress (L-5 keeps the solar calendar and Greenwich Mean Time throughout most of the habitat) to choose three to 10 representatives, depending on its population, to send to the L-5 Council. The council has authority over station management, port and safety regulations, and general civil order, but it depends on local constabularies to keep order on the individual wheels.

L-5, as a whole, is very jealous of its ethnic and social differences; the local congresses determine what laws are necessary for their wheels, and custom demands that visitors abide by local law, even if they come from another part of the habitat.

Since the second expansion, L-5's primary industry has been its port and shipyard facilities. Ship construction and maintenance occupy a little less than 65 percent of L-5's work force. Of the remainder, a growing segment is involved in space-based manufacturing, and about 12 percent is devoted to life support, habitat engineering, administration, and tourism.

Daily life for the inhabitants of L-5 greatly resembles life on Earth (or wherever). Work, school, shopping, and recreation are like what's available in London or Cairo or Rio, depending on the wheel. Outdoor spaces with skylights and appropriate foliage, usually on A deck nearest the hub, provide park space. In some locations, two or more neighborhoods may share a single parkland, if the climate preference isn't too different between them.

A lively nightlife, not to be sneered at, lights up L-5, distinctive on every wheel. A visitor could literally sample the world's entertainment going from Diana to Ramachuk and back again, from the placid collegiate clubs of Cousonne to the dark coffee houses of Shi'at. Many tourists do little more when they come here.

Surprisingly for an artificial habitat, L-5 has an underground—and not just one, but many. Nearly all the wheels have "punker" gangs, composed mainly of youths of varying degrees of rebelliousness. Most, even more surprisingly, are multiethnic, feeling and expressing more loyalty for their wheel and their fellows than for their supposed heritages. A sizable number also have links to organized crime. Some serve as enforcers for some of the criminal bosses; others pursue other shadowy transactions or orchestrate elaborate practical jokes to demonstrate their antipathy toward the "establishment."

Since most punkers have respectable daytime occupations, and each underground is unique to each wheel and its

culture, no uniform means for eliminating the underground has been found. And with the growth of culture as an ex-

portable item (in the form of books, music, paintings and sculpture) and the proliferation of underground trappings on some pretty important people (Laszlo Pfeiffer, the composer, and novelist Angelika Adams for two), the L-5 Council and the local congresses have hesitated to try.

L-5's approach to its criminal elements is unique. Though some prominent smugglers and persons linked to criminal organizations live on L-5, so long as those activities bring no attention or notoriety to L-5, neither the local police nor the council bothers them. The usual punishment for minor infractions is civic service, usually in the fish tanks or algae farms of the life-support sections. Imprisonment is wasteful on a habitat where every hand is needed for survival. For more serious crimes, such as angering the OQC or ESA, the usual punishment is banishment—a ticket to somewhere else, most likely another habitat not in Earth space.

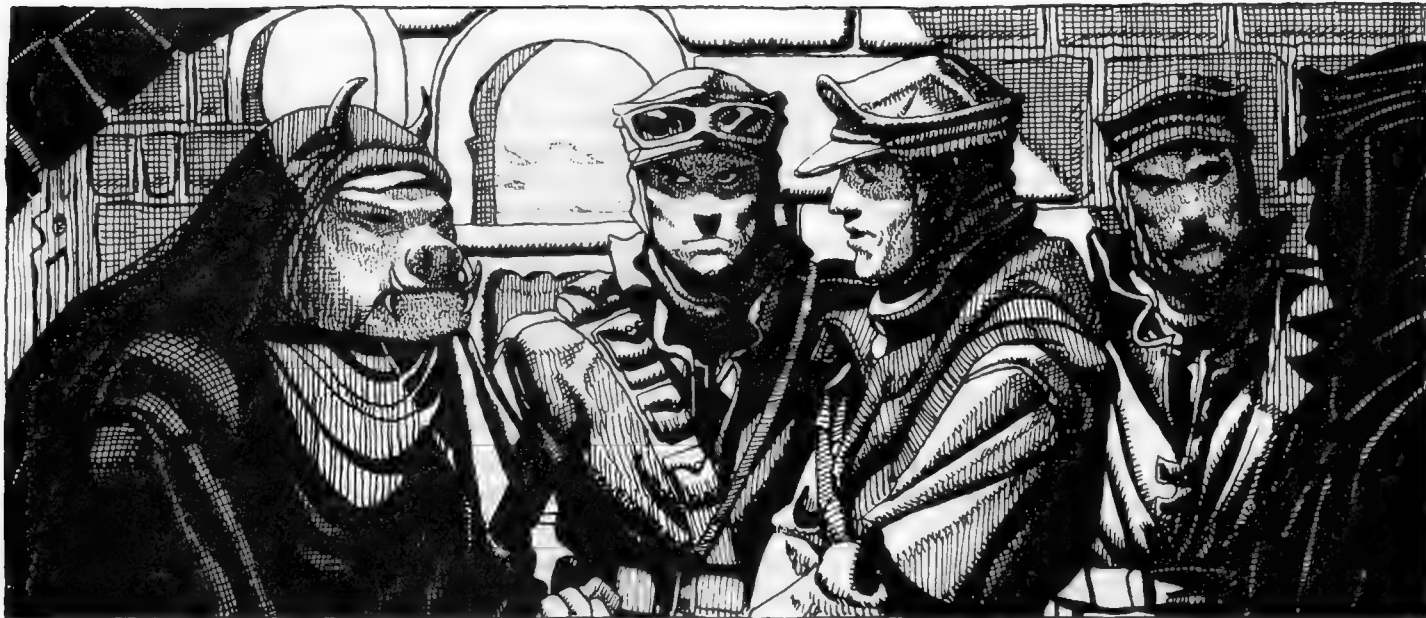
For the most serious crimes—like murder—the typical sentence of the council's court is the "down-ticket." A criminal is shipped directly down to Earth—at his own expense, if possible—to serve out a lengthy prison term in spaces that L-5 leases from penal institutions in Africa and Brazil. These criminals are permanently banned from returning to any space habitat. More down-tickets have been given than is realized—the council finds no profit in advertising its troubles.

The OQC maintains a medium-sized office on L-5. The OQC is more concerned with contamination reaching Earth than it is with any invasion of a closed ecological system like L-5. Still, with the completion of the beanstalk and Gateway, more traffic is expected to flow from L-5 Earthward, and so OQC may be forced to enhance its 30-person force of inspectors to screen ships incoming to Gateway a little more thoroughly.

As it stands now, OQC inspectors are not well liked aboard L-5 since they represent the encroachment of Earthside authority into L-5's freewheeling ways. OQC's operating charter gives its inspectors free run throughout the habitat, and they answer to no authority but OQC's courts and their superiors on Gateway. No one on L-5 wants to protect any smuggler stupid enough to endanger the habitat by bringing illegal drugs through it, but the independent-minded inhabitants of L-5 feel a natural resentment toward the intrusion. The situation is not tense—yet—but it is awkward and threatens to get worse.

Some groups on L-5 have discussed inviting aliens to visit; some Xiang artists would be enthusiastically welcomed by the inhabitants of Godfrey. Such visits would be unprecedented—and would undoubtedly be prohibited by the OQC—but L-5's proud iconoclastic culture seems to point toward accession to the visitation idea. Both the Sung and the Pentapods have expressed an interest in seeing more of humans and their worlds, and many on L-5 would also find it fascinating to offer that chance. It has not yet happened—but it could. Ω

2300AD



ON THE DARK SIDE

Everyone feels a sneaking desire to be bad occasionally. Most RPGs allow players to satisfy these urges by playing amoral or evil characters—an important exception is West End Games' *Star Wars*. In *Star Wars* anyone with enough Dark Side points becomes a non-player character—a villain controlled by the referee—so there can never be a truly evil player character.

On the surface, there are good reasons for this; after all, the Rebel Alliance is going to win the war, the Empire will be crushed, and no one really wants to be on the losing side. The drawback to this viewpoint is the simple fact that the Rebellion ends once the emperor is killed. Imperial remnants will still cause trouble, but the Rebellion (or a reborn Republic) will become the legitimate government and therefore inherently less interesting.

Accordingly, most *Star Wars* scenarios will probably be set in the period of Imperial rule. For most of this time

the Empire is the ascendant power and wins most of the battles; if the Empire wasn't the overwhelming force we all know and hate, there would not be any reason to oppose it. From the Imperial point of view, the Rebellion is a terrorist organization, not a group of freedom fighters. Anyone who disagrees will soon be weeded out of the Imperial service (and probably terminated with extreme prejudice). Loyal agents of the Empire are just as heroic, in their own minds, as any rebel, and their duties (an occasional assassination, interrogation of rebel spies, etc.) are justified as valuable peace-keeping operations. Of course a few planets are destroyed, but the Empire has plenty to spare; the cancer of rebellion must be burned out before it can infect the galaxy. Under the leadership of the emperor and his loyal aide, Darth Vader, the misguided fanatics of the Rebel Alliance will eventually be squashed and reap the bitter fruits of their criminal activities.

An Imperial campaign probably isn't a good idea; after awhile, destroying planets or wearing clumsy white armor loses its charm. However, an occasional Imperial adventure may be an interesting change for your players. To preserve game balance, it's probably not a good idea to run Imperial adventures at a high level. The adventurers should be minor pawns of the Empire's military or intelligence arms. For obvious reasons their equipment should be limited—a star destroyer (or the Death Star itself) may be a little too much firepower to entrust to player characters. In other words, an Imperial scenario should be a distorted reflection of the normal small-team *Star Wars* adventure. The Imperial Scouts (described below) provide a suitable background for such teams.

THE IMPERIAL SCOUTS

Originally the Old Republic's exploratory and scientific organization, the scouts are

now primarily used for intelligence work. Their data archives include maps and records of most known worlds—everything needed to prepare for covert operations. If more information is needed, the scouts will usually infiltrate the area with a few agents, disguised as merchants, pirates, or (increasingly often) rebels. A mission is often the prelude to invasion.

Scouts have greater apparent freedom than most other Imperial underlings. They are often out of touch with their commanders for long periods and must be trusted to serve the Empire without any betrayal. They are well paid and usually highly motivated. Scout teams usually consist of four to six operatives transported in a nondescript small craft (such as a stock light freighter) with no military markings.

Their craft are usually equipped with concealed compartments and weapons. (A legend persists that the *Millennium Falcon* may have originally been built for the

service—certainly few civilian shipyards have the ability to create a ship with so many undetectable compartments.)

CHARACTER TEMPLATES

To ensure loyalty, the Empire makes sure every scout falls into one or more of the following categories.

Templates marked *ANH* are from the sourcebook *A New Hope*.

Imperial Aristocrat: This character likes the Empire and the luxurious fruits of Imperial service. Why would anyone want to give up power and a villa on a pleasure planet for some cock-eyed dream of freedom? Genuine Imperials are likely to command any mission, since they have the most to lose if it fails.

Templates: Brash Pilot, Laconic Scout, Retired Imperial Captain.

ANH: Tie Fighter Pilot, Death Star Officer.

Quote: "The Empire is our defense against chaos."

Seduced by the Dark Side: This character believes that the Dark Side will ultimately triumph. He has some Force-related power and uses it for selfish ends. Naturally Darth Vader and other Imperial leaders can spot such warped talents and recruit them into the service. The emperor is reluctant to trust those with Force-related skills. Given time, they might threaten his life.

He goes to great lengths to ensure that such agents remain weak and firmly cowed; they are never given independent commands where their talents might

tages make it totally impossible. These scouts are rarely trusted and are usually regarded as expendable by their leaders.

Templates: Wookiee, almost any other. No real changes are needed. The character has been hauled out of an Imperial prison and told to serve the Empire or have family and friends suffer the consequences. Preferably, the character should have some skill vital to the mission.

Quote: "If I help you my family dies!"

Brute: Athug—too vicious to find the Rebel Alliance attractive but happy to work for Imperial credits. A cut above the average stormtrooper, but that's not saying much.

STAR WARS

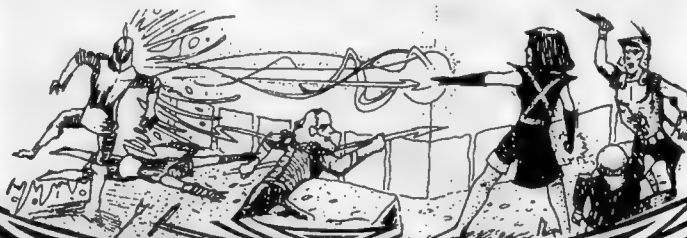
rial forces, with the exception of lightsabers and X-wing fighters. Even the fighters could probably be supplied from captured equipment (or a new production line developed) if there was real need. The Empire often disguises agents as rebels for "dirty tricks"—missions against nominally friendly powers.

If necessary, much more powerful equipment is available. A star destroyer might be used to divert attention from a scout infiltration operation, or probe droids might be dropped to explore a planet before the scouts arrive. These operations will be

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Armored Cavalry in the CAF

Christopher King

The oldest and probably the most colorful military unit of the Commonwealth, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment has been an important part of the struggle to hold Shannendam County against the TOG forces. The 2nd has seen action on almost every planet in the county and in numerous places outside Shannendam. Its successes made such an impression with the Commonwealth Armed Forces Joint Command Staff that in 6818, 10 understrength units were reorganized as armored cavalry regiments. Experienced tankers from the 2nd ACR formed the Royal Armored Cavalry Training Center on New Janos in Shannendam County. Here the experience of 10 centuries of cavalry knowledge and tactics was drawn upon to train the new cavalry troopers. The new armored cavalry regiments took the 2nd ACR's organization as a model and added small changes to increase flexibility. The history and traditions of the 2nd are well known, and many of these traditions were passed down to the newly formed regiments.

BACKGROUND

The new armored cavalry regiments have already returned with spectacular successes in the field. Combat ribbons with names like Brie's Station, Wuj, Mordichai, Haven and Stephen have all been added to the armored cavalry's colors. The raid on Haven is a prime example of the stunning abilities of an ACR in action. In 6825, CAF Intelligence discovered the construction of large industrial facilities capable of armored vehicle assembly on the planet in Keserdal County. The presence of an industrial complex in the occupied county meant shorter logistical lines for the invading TOG forces. The Joint Command decided on a bold move to prevent the TOG military from completing this facility. The 9th ACR was eager



to undertake such a daring mission. Designated Task Force Tornado, the strike force disguised the transports as freighters and penetrated deep into occupied space. The raid caught the TOG garrison legion so off guard that the garrison prefect was unaware of the attack until he arrived the next morning to find his command building a pile of rubble. The transports then made the dash out of TOG-controlled space, dodging in and out of T-space to shake pursuers. Deemed one of the most successful operations in the war against TOG, Operation Tornado is a tribute to the skill and determination of the armored cavalry.

Disaster: Not all armored cavalry operations have happy endings, though. In 6826, the situation on Osterin in Rhoalter County was grim: the 593rd Strike Legion was hard pressed by the two TOG legions on the planet. The 12th ACR was dropped on planet to support the renegade legion and relieve the pressure that was tearing it apart. Unfortunately for the 12th, faulty intelligence led it into the same trap as the 593rd. The light tanks of the ACR could not stand head-to-head with the heavy tanks of the TOG strike legion in the encircled area. The 2356th B'ekkal Light Assault Legion was unable to rescue either the strike legion or the ACR, and both were overrun and destroyed by the TOG forces.

The 2356th withdrew from Osterin a month later. This action stands as a harsh reminder of the limitations of the armored cavalry. When forced into battles of attrition, the cavalry will never win. The armored cavalry regiment is organized to provide screening actions for major assaults, rearguard actions for withdrawals, deep-penetration and recon raids, and to interdict supply lines. Any time an ACR is deprived of its advantage of speed and surprise, or forced to stand against units deploying heavier armor, the regiment is most likely to be overwhelmed.

ORGANIZATION

The new armored cavalry regiments are organized on the Baufrin model, with emphasis on self-sufficiency at the cohort level and decentralized command and control. The regiments consist of four squadrons of seven troops each. The 2nd ACR designates its units in a unique way, and this practice was continued in the newly formed ACRs. Cohorts are referred to as squadrons, and centuries are called troops. The squadron HQ troop is designed to ensure a certain amount of independence at the squadron level. Each squadron HQ troop fields one platoon each of maintenance, military police, signal corps, medical, and supply units. In addition, each HQ troop fields a platoon of engineers to provide greater flexibility on the battlefield. The regimental HQ troop contains a combat team of Eradicator air defense vehicles. This new organizational structure is an independent unit of six vehicles and is being introduced on the Manus level in units of the CAF. The squadrons of the ACR consist of the headquarters troop, an augmented artillery battery, three armored cavalry troops, one troop of medium grav armor, and an oversized heavy grav armor unit, referred to as a company.

The troops are organized identically, with the 2nd ACR's formations acting as the model. Each includes an HQ platoon, two armored platoons, and one armored infantry platoon. The armored cavalry troops deploy the famous and versatile Wolverine light grav tank and the agile Viper APC. The Wolverines of the existing ACRs are being phased out as the new Partisan armored cavalry combat vehicle becomes available to front-line units. The medium troops deploy the well-known Liberator medium grav tank and the standard Spartius APC. The heavy grav company is comprised of four platoons of Dominator heavy grav tanks. Oversized to add a backbone to the light tanks of the ACR, the company is used to hold failing positions and exploit breakthroughs. The augmented artillery battery contains four platoons of Pedden artillery vehicles. An additional platoon is added to increase the firepower available to units in the field.

Despite the size of the ACR, which is about one-third the size of a typical strike legion, the unit is extremely versatile in combat. The officers of armored cavalry regiments receive almost one and one-half times as many training hours as officers from other nonspecialized units. The training at the

Royal Armored Cavalry Training Center emphasizes tactical control at the troop and squadron level, rather than the regimental level. The 800 soldiers who comprise an ACR are

RENEGADE LEGION

the highest quality of troopers found in the CAF and renegade legions. A high level of training, expertise, ability, and discipline is emphasized at RACTC. These factors are important for the success of any armored cavalry mission.

VEHICLES

The armored cavalry deploys common combat vehicles found in most units of the CAF and renegade legions: the Wolverine LGT, the Viper light APC, the Liberator MGT, the Spartius medium APC, the Dominator HGT, and the Pedden artillery vehicle. In addition to the combat elements, the armored cavalry deploys the variants of those vehicles: the command vehicle versions of the Viper and Spartius APCs, the grav engineer variant of the Liberator (the Constructor), and the medical evac version of the Viper. These vehicles and their variants are found in military units across the Commonwealth.

The armored cavalry, however, performs a specialized and important part in combat. It follows that the cavalry should get a specialized vehicle that suits its purposes.

Experience has shown that the tanks of an ACR are forced time and time again to engage heavier units. The Wolverine, an excellent light tank, doesn't have the staying power to survive long against heavier tanks in the high-intensity environment of the modern battlefield. The Commonwealth Design Bureau responded to requests from cavalry tankers for an armored cavalry combat vehicle tailor-made for the ACRs. In 6822, bids for a contract to produce an ACCV were awarded to Kassahlava Defense Systems.

The new design prototypes, tentatively called the ACCV-X1, were delivered in 6825—under cost and on time. The Naram Company, which also produces the Viper APC, delivered a light tank with speed, hitting power, and endurance. The ACCV-X1 was a total success with the tankers of the 4th

VEHICLE STATISTICS

Partisan armored cavalry combat vehicle

Class: Light ACCV

Cost: 898,600

Mass: 135

Engine: 1250

Thrust: 8

Scenario Points: 9

Infantry Squad: No

Shields:

Front: 50

Right: 50

Left: 50

Stern: 50

Bottom: 50

Armor:

Front: 60

Right: 50

Left: 50

Stern: 50

Bottom: 30

Turret: 70

WEAPONS

Type	Location	Damage	Range
1.5/4	Laser Turret	5	20
1.5/4	Laser Turret	5	20
1.5/6	Laser Turret	7	20
TVLG (6)	Turret	T	6
Vulcan-3	Turret	S	NA
SMLM (2)	Hull 1	T	10
SMLM (2)	Hull 2	T	10

ACR, the unit charged with testing the vehicle in the field. The 4th saw action in the defense of Pembroke County and helped bog down the TOG offensive there. After the field tests were completed in 6827, the 4th ACR submitted several design modifications to the engineers of KDS. The weapons suite was upgraded; a larger power plant was installed; the hull armor was improved; and new ECM and ECCM software was added. In 6829, the ACCV-X1 was officially named the Partisan ACCV by the CAF Joint Command and ordered into full production.

Capabilities: Combat veterans of the 2nd Armored Cavalry were consulted extensively by the vehicle design teams of KDS in an effort to produce the best possible armored cavalry combat vehicle. The popular Naram double-hull design was selected with a chassis similar to that of the Wolverine.

The Partisan has about five more tons of duralight composite armor than the Wolverine, providing more protection on the sides and turret. The vehicle is protected against antivehicular missiles by the Excalibur D-300 Vulcan point defense system. The tank is as quick and nimble as other light tanks, with the Pitban 1250 power plant providing plenty of thrust for maneuver.

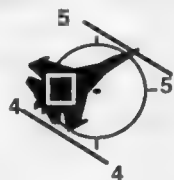
The weapons suite is a point of interest. The main armament consists of two Hellfire 1.5/4 lasers and a large Durham 1.5/6 laser mounted in the turret. Supporting these lasers

is a Naram TVLG-6 rack located on the right turret slope and twin SMLM-2 launchers found in the hull positions. The lack of ballistic weapons would seem to put the Partisan at a disadvantage. The success of vehicles like the Spartius APC, which also mounts no ballistic weapon, however, validates the choice. Armed primarily with lasers, the ACCV can engage targets out to four kilometers, and with the armored cavalry's preference for long-range combat, this factor becomes very important.

The Partisan ACCV was designed to provide the armored cavalry regiments of the CAF with a vehicle fully capable of performing all the tasks required by ACR doctrine. The latest hardware and software has been utilized to give the ACCV every chance in running battles, force recon, delaying actions, long range recon patrols, rearguard actions, screening engagements, deep-penetration raids, and many of the other missions of the ACR. The internal systems suite includes many components found in recon units. Command, control, and communications (C³) equipment is extensive. The latest in avoidance software is also used to reduce the IR, UV, grav field, radar signatures and the light reflection/refraction slope profile of the ACCV. The Partisan ACCV is an armored cavalry combat vehicle designed to ensure the continued successes of the armored cavalry in the Commonwealth's fight against the oppression of the Terran Overlord Government. Ω

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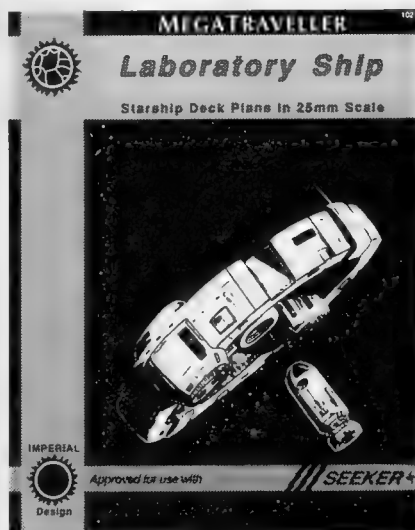
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LEADER OF THE PACK!



Balancing *Space Hulk*

Lester W. Smith

Get that flamer movin', marine! If you haven't cleared the intersection in the next 10 seconds, I'll personally come down there and kick your butt. You got that, Daniels?"

"Yes, sergeant!"

"Good. Spider, Cowboy, you watchin' our backs?"

"The 'stealers haven't shown yet, sarge. Wait! Here they come!"

Dakka dakka. Dakka dakka. Click.

"Spider's bolter jammed! They're all over him! We're not gonna hold 'em! Run, marines, run!"

"Wiley, cover that side passage. I'll watch the rear. Daniels, I figure you got about 30 seconds before they swarm over the two of us and are nip-

pin' at your heels. If you haven't reached the control room by then, we'll have died in vain."

"Sarge, this is Wiley. I can see a wave comin' down the corridor."

"Show no fear, Wiley. We're Blood Angels."

Dakka dakka. Dakka dakka.

Sound something like the movie, *Aliens*? It's not. It represents a typical playing of *Space Hulk*, a boardgame of man vs. alien combat in the *Warhammer 40,000* universe.

In this game, one or two squads of Imperial Space Marines in Terminator armor run desperate missions through the barren corridors of a kilometers-long wreck in the face of unending waves of

assault by quick and deadly "Genestealers." The marines have up to 10 men with energy weapons and flamethrowers; the aliens have only their bare hands (four each, with nasty claws), but there are virtually infinite numbers of them. As well, while the Genestealer player has unlimited time in which to make moves, the marine player is timed and has only a few minutes each turn. As you might expect, then, most of the missions the marines run are of the "reach a goal before you all die" variety—no mention is made of getting back out.

Unfortunately, it seems that the odds are stacked against the marines in every scenario the game contains.

The rules suggest that players go on to create their own scenarios, but this does not help players as they work through the scenarios included. Neither do those scenarios provide good examples for creating your own.

The purpose of this article, then, is to provide some advice about balancing the scenarios included in the game and, in so doing, to reveal methods of adjusting scenarios you create in order to help achieve an even match.

GENERAL ADVICE

First, be sure that the Genestealer player draws reinforcements at random. The rules are very careful to explain that marine command points are to be placed in an opaque container and drawn at random each turn, but they are nowhere near as specific about Genestealer reinforcements.

If you assume that drawing reinforcements works just like drawing command points, however, the game plays pretty well.

Second, it is usually best to have the more inexperienced of the two players take the part of the Genestealers. Timed turns can put a lot of pressure on the marine player, especially during critical points in battle, and novices are better off without this added concern. Also, the game just seems more forgiving of the Genestealer player.

One square more or less can mean the difference between life and death to a marine, but the Genestealers can be a little less concerned about such precision.

Third, flamers are wonderful for clearing and blocking passages. In some scenarios, trading in a stormbolter marine or two for flamer marines can give the marine player a better chance at winning. The game provides three extra flamers to slip over stormbolters, but you'll have to make your own flamer markers for the extras.

Fourth, as the marine player, just when you think things are going well, your lieutenant lets his mind wander and neglects to advise the squads of nearby Genestealer activity. In game terms, you've just drawn a 1 or 2 chit for command points.

The random nature of command points is one of the things that adds to the excitement of play, but a series of low numbers can cripple you. One way

to adjust a scenario's balance, then, is to give the marines a very alert lieutenant, represented by removing the low numbers from the command point mix. It can be very helpful to the marine player to know that the marines are guaranteed a minimum of two or three points per turn.

Finally, four other simple adjustments can be made to a scenario to change its balance. They are:

- Provide the marine player with more marines (if the scenario lists less than two full squads).

- Reduce the number of counters the Genestealer player gets (starting counters, reinforcement counters, or maybe both).

- Adjust the victory conditions somewhat, reducing the number of turns the marines have to survive, numbers of Genestealers they have to kill, etc.

- Change the physical parameters of the map, removing doors, shortening corridors, and/or limiting Genestealer entry areas.

SPECIFIC SCENARIOS

Here, then, is how the modifications above can be applied to the scenarios included in the game.

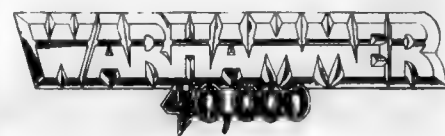
1 Suicide Mission: The flamer marine is obviously the critical figure in this scenario. It is suggested that one of the bolter marines be converted to a second flamer, allowing one flamer to cover the squad's rear while the other presses toward the control room.

You might also want to take the 1 chit out of the command point mix for this scenario.

2 Exterminate: This mission seems perhaps the most fairly matched in the game. If you can't score 30 Genestealers as

the marine player, however, don't feel bad. As you replay the scenario, just switch sides and keep tabs on who is able to rack up the most kills as the marine player. If the Genestealers are played cunningly, the totals will always be low.

3 Rescue: Because of the high number of bottlenecks and 'stealer entry areas on the map, flamer marines can be very important in this scenario as well. It is suggested that one of the two squads contain two flamers, and the other its



normal complement of one.

Also, as the marines absolutely must keep moving, take the 1 and 2 chit out of the command point mix to give them more mobility.

4 Cleanse and Burn: A good marine player can virtually always flame one of the two target rooms, but the other is a real problem. Try removing the four central doors from the long hallways (the doors on either side of the third intersection from the right side of the map) to reduce the number of areas where the Genestealers can lie in ambush. This will give the marines a clearer shot toward their objectives, keeping them from bogging down halfway there.

5 Decoy: Five marines, the equivalent of one full squad, is a lot of men to have exit the board in order to win. Reduce that number to four, and don't let the Genestealer have any starting forces. For less experienced marine players, reduce the number of marines that must exit the board to three.

6 Defend: In this scenario, the tables are turned somewhat, and it is the Genestealer player who has to take an objective within a certain number of turns. Still, 16 turns is a lot of time for the Genestealers, especially considering their rapid movement rate. It is suggested that the number of turns be reduced to 12. Do not make any adjustments to the marines.

CONCLUSION

The fact that there are differences between marine and Genestealer capabilities and turn sequences is one of the reasons *Space Hulk* is so much fun to play. Balancing the scenarios by giving the marines a fighting chance to achieve their goals can only add to that enjoyment. The recommendations given will help balance the game's scenarios, and they also give *Space Hulk* players more options for adjusting scenarios created from scratch, thus enhancing the game's long-term playability. Ω

Over past years it has become glaringly obvious that the combative side of role-playing games is potentially very dull, and many rule systems fail to realistically simulate combat. The player is normally at the mercy of his dice—"realistic" combat systems simply add to the number of dice rolls required by the combatants. The *Albedo* rules were produced in an attempt to bring challenge and interest back into role-playing combats, as well as create a very playable skirmish wargame.

In order to achieve this, *Albedo's* combat rules are far simpler than they could have been in the regions of armor penetration and wounding, as the speed of play was found to be essential to the "feel" of the game. Maneuver and position have taken precedence over graphically described critical hits. Wounding is unfortunately very close to real life. Death can be graphic enough without making needless elaborations.

The following rules convert basic *Albedo* combats into a hexagon map-based skirmish wargame. These rules are designed as a game supplement, not as a stand-alone system, and are not playable without the *Albedo* game rules.

TACTICAL MOVEMENT

All game systems for determining sequence of actions, initiative, hits, severity of wounds, fatigue, and the like are precisely as detailed in the main body of the *Albedo* rules. What this rules supplement intends is to introduce map movement to the basic systems already used in the game.

Two map scales are used for combat movement. The grand tactical scale, which is normally used for firefights, is on a scale of 10 meters to the hex. The tactical scale, which is used for melee, the inside of buildings, etc., is to the scale of one hex equals two meters.

In the grand tactical scale, a walking character moves

Tactical Strike

Paul Kidd

Map-based skirmish rules and an exciting new scenario for *Albedo*—a science-fiction role-playing game published by Thoughts & Images, based on the story *Erma Felna, EDF*, from the comic magazine *Albedo, Anthropomorphics*.

forward one hex (10 meters) in phase five of the turn (the act of walking is assumed to be taking place throughout the turn). Running or sprinting characters move one hex on the map whenever the character expends two actions to do so. A sprinting character moves one additional hex during phase five of each turn (this does not cost the player additional actions). Vehicles move one hex for every 10 kilometers per hour at which they are travelling. Crawling characters take two turns to cross a hex. To simulate a jog, alternate one turn of walking with one turn of running.

Movement on small-scale tactical maps is performed at five times the rate listed above. Walking characters move one hex (two meters) in every turn phase. Running characters move two hexes whenever they expend an action to do so. Sprinting

characters move three hexes whenever they expend an action on movement. Characters not running or sprinting may also expend one action to move one hex straight backward.

Characters who are both moving and performing an action during a single phase will conduct their movement and changes of facing before adjudicating the results of their action. Movement of characters is integrated with the normal action priority system and takes place in order of character initiative like all other actions.

Character Facing

Whenever an enemy character enters a hex, defending characters who are either walking or stationary may turn one hex side to face him, as long as the attacker is in line of sight before he moves into the new hex. Defenders on foot may change facing in this manner any number of times during a turn. Characters who are running or sprinting may change their facing up to one hex side per phase. Stationary and walking characters may change their facing by any number of hex sides desired at the start or end of a phase.

ILR SOLDIERS

Identity	Str	Sta	M. Dex	Co-ord	Reas	Int	Dve	Actions	Gun Skill
Lieutenant Tehok	7	8	10	8	14	13 (1D6+1)	13	3	10
Squad Leader Annihan	11	11	10	9	10	14 (3D3)	11	4	13
Trooper TucheK	9	11	11	7	13	2 (1D6+1)	10	3	11
Trooper Benen	5	14	11	10	8	9 (1D6)	8	4	11
Trooper Nikko	7	10	7	11	12	5 (1D6-1)	14	4	11
Trooper Martig	6	6	12	9	13	7 (1D6-1)	7	4	12
Trooper Hessel	8	12	9	7	6	10 (1D6)	7	3	9
Trooper Kohok	9	7	10	6	13	9 (1D6)	15	3	10
<i>Vehicle Crew:</i>									
Sergeant Tabor	5	9	12	9	13	2 (1D6+1)	10	4	12
Driver	11	8	13	13	8	9 (1D6)	7	5	13

COMBAT ON THE TACTICAL MAP

Melee takes place only between characters who occupy adjacent tactical hexes (for combat using the grand tactical scale, melee may take place when characters enter the same grand tactical hex, whereupon the combat switches to tactical mode). Once a character is engaged (is challenged successfully or announces his intention to attack a character after completing his movement), neither he nor his opponent may move from the current hex for the rest of the turn (except to dodge). A melee weapon can strike into any of the three hexes immediately adjoining the forward half of the wielder's hex.

Special Considerations

When a character dodges a melee strike, he must change the position of his counter on the tactical combat map. The player must either change the facing of the character's counter in the current hex or move the counter one hex to the right, left, or rear of the current position. The only directions barred to the player are those hexes occupied by other characters. Crossing a minor obstacle, such as a line of bushes, deducts one hex from the character's possible tactical movement. Major obstacles, such as fences, require a characteristic test against the difficulty of the task. To barge through a hedge, for instance, the character might be required to take a test of his Strength or Agility vs. average difficulty to succeed in his attempt.

Challenges

A major difference between *Albedo* skirmish combat and other boardgames is the challenge system, which allows characters to preempt the actions of their opponents. Performing a challenge attempt will expend the character's next action for the current turn, but a successful challenge may be converted into any type of action the player desires.

All actions for a character are temporarily suspended any time a successful challenge is made against him. They are resumed after the resolution of the challenge situation (provided that the actions are possible and reasonable after the challenge is resolved). A challenge may be made by any character who meets the following conditions.

- The character has not yet successfully made a challenge attempt during this turn.
- The character can see the character whose actions are being challenged.
- The character still has at least one action remaining to him for this turn.

Challenge attempts may not be made on actions which are the result of a challenge attempt (i.e., you can't preempt someone's preemptive attack).

Challenges are made on the comparison chart, with the challenger comparing his own Intuition to that of his opponent. A successful roll indicates that the challenge was successful.

Timing of Challenges: Challenge attempts are made as soon as the target character announces his intentions to move or perform a specific action during the current turn phase. A challenge may be conducted any time the target character enters a hex, or during melee combat in an attempt to preempt an opponent's strike. If the challenge is successful, both characters involved in the challenge temporarily halt their move-

ment. The successful challenger performs one action, regardless of whether the character is entitled to perform an action

during the current phase. Movement is then resumed, taking into account changes which may have occurred due to the challenge. Challenges may also be made against a character whenever that character exposes himself in a hex at which the character's opponent is aiming (this is termed "covering a hex"). In this case, the shots fired at the exposed character count as aimed shots.

Vision Arcs

Many helmets or vision apertures obscure a character's vision to some degree. The vision arcs of characters on the map boards are detailed below.

Normal Vision: 180° (three hex arc)

Partially Obscured Vision: 120° (two hex arc). Visored helmets, view from a small window, etc.

Obscured Vision: 60° (one hex side-wide line of sight). Vehicle observation slits, etc.

ALBEDO



Tactical Strike Scenario

This scenario is designed to simulate part of the ground fighting during the EDF invasion of the planet Derzon. The characters represent foot sloggers dropped into a small section of the major city of Andis. Their mission—neutralize and control the area of the city bounded by the game map (created by the referee). The scenario works best when used with the skirmish rules detailed earlier in this article.

This scenario can easily be expanded into a campaign. Military characters can be introduced into a squad, develop friendships and enmities with their workmates, receive the call up for a combat mission, and suffer through whatever personal crises this provokes. The campaign on Derzon can be extended to last for many arduous days, in which the characters can fear for their lives and test their ties of friendship to their comrades.

At the end of a campaign based on the fighting at Derzon, players should feel they have been well tried and tested. Remember that the aim of the Republican troops on-planet is to cause the EDF forces to create as much damage to civilian lives and property as possible, and they will deploy themselves accordingly. Characters of kindly or honorable disposition may be haunted by the events of the Derzon campaign for the rest of their lives.

ATTACKING PARTY

An EDF infantry squad consists of eight men (seven troopers and a squad leader). Officers or flight personnel are welcome in the scenario (flight officers will be crewmembers who have lost their vehicles). Squad leaders and officers will have vacc suit helmets and air/ground communicators. All other characters will have battle helmets and short-range comms. Personal weapons and impact armor all around are a must. The squad should also have at least one machine-gun, one grenade launcher, and a first aid kit. If fewer than eight players are participating, pad the party out with non-player characters (remembering to roll up dispositions for the NPCs).

If this scenario is to be played as a “one off” action, it is best to simply note the characters’ equipment on a piece of paper. If it is being run as part of a campaign, however, then the use of equipment slips will be essential to the feel of the game.

This region has an aerodyne gunship in general support. If the party should desire it, an air strike can be called in from above by using the party’s air/ground comm gear. Roll 2D6—an air strike becomes available on a roll of 6 or less (rollable once every turn).

Air strikes will not arrive for a minimum of 1D10 phases after they have been called. The gunship mounts two light hyperkinetic guns and two beam weapons. A maximum of three air strikes may be called in during the course of the game, with a cumulative die roll modifier of +2 being made on air support rolls on each successive request for an air strike after the first.

The players’ party may enter from any map corner edge. If the party members decide to wimp out at any stage, they must roll for air support to arrange a troop transport to pick them up. This will arrive in 1D10 turns.

DEFENDING FORCES

This area is held by a squad of eight ILR rabbit troopers and a light vehicle (a light, armored, six-wheeler mounting an SFMG.).

The referee must decide upon their positions before the game begins (they will start the game hidden). The referee must make the defenders’ moves for them, remembering that the rabbits can only plan to respond to things they can see or hear. The referee should decide what alternatives face the rabbits at any given decision point and randomize the result by rolling 1D6.

Lt. Tehok and Squad Leader Annihan are armed with 6mm assault carbines; the rest are armed with 6mm assault rifles. All troopers carry two or three hand grenades and at least four spare magazines for their rifles. Trooper Tucheck has a light grenade launcher fitted to his rifle. The vehicle crewmembers carry machinepistols with a single magazine of ammunition. All the rabbits wear ILR ballistic armor and battle helmets.

Republican soldiers are highly motivated, efficient, rational opponents. ILR soldiers will try all manner of dirty tricks—like setting up a fire point inside a building occupied by civilians.

The ILR soldiers will fight fanatically while they can, but they will surrender if it becomes obvious that they can inflict no further damage. They are willing to conceal hand grenades upon themselves in order to try one last suicidal attempt to hurt their enemies (treat them a little like WWII Japanese in this respect), but only if the swap of their lives for enemy casualties contributes significantly to the Republican efforts.

Lt. Tehok has a pistol on a bowden up one arm (designed to fire frangible bullets down his sleeve at someone within close range). He will use this little gadget on any enemy foolish enough to help him if he is wounded.

PLAYING THE SCENARIO

This scenario is designed to simulate some of the aspects of a planetary invasion and provide a bit of military experience for characters.

But remember that it is not designed as a chance to knock off huge volumes of characters. By all means, play the ILR soldiers as clever, but be careful not to turn the game into a bloodbath.

Innovative ideas on the side of the players are to be encouraged. Dodging through buildings, requesting aerial reconnaissance, and even blowing holes through walls with variable grenades are all very good plays and are well within the scope of the scenario.

Remember to utilize the individual temperaments of the party’s NPCs. Reckless or cautious characters will obviously have distinctive reactions to the ongoing combat, but other personality types will also come into play if the battle extends over any great period of time.

There is no great rush for the player characters to complete the mission, but if more than two hours go by, have the orbital command control net contact the players to demand results (just to put some imaginary “pressure” on the adventurers). The player characters do have a great deal of time, but their commanders also have a schedule to stick to, after all. Ω

Vargr eat your favorite copy?
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Challenge Back Issues

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Traveller: Siege by John M. Ford, Deck Plans for the Fleet Escort *Lisiani*, Q-Ships, The Darian Way of Life, Planetary Invasions, Traveller Sector Generator. **Twilight:** 2000: Twilight Miniatures Rules by Frank Chadwick, The Baltic Coast (A Loot-er's Guide).

29

Traveller: A Decade of Traveller, The Universal Task Profile, Scientists, Picking a Homeworld, Traveller News Service. **Twilight:** 2000: Equipment List, Weather, Inside the M1 Tank, Buildings: Optional Rules for Urban Locales. **2300 AD:** Trade in 2300, In the Cards.

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Traveller: The Spice of Life, Fire Aboard Ship. **Twilight:** 2000: Citymaker. **2300 AD:** A World Invaded. **Space:** 1889: Victorian Times and Society. **BattleTech:** AFT 1B Afterburner. **Star Wars:** Team Recovery, H-Wing Fighters. **Renegade Legion:** The 9867th Renegade Armored Support. **Star Trek:** Spaceports in *Star Trek*.

30*

Traveller: The Warehouse. Stormriders, The Fall of the Imperium, There When You Need Them. **Twilight:** 2000: Canada: 2000, Twilight: 2000 Equipment List, Shell Game. **2300 AD:** Stutterwarp, Bayern, IEX, Building the Perfect 'Mech.

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Traveller: The Green Hills of Earth, Starship Design Notes. **Twilight:** Red Maple, Equipment for Armor Crews. **2300 AD:** Devil in the Dark, Anatomy of a Missile. **Space:** 1889: Darkness Falls from the Air. **Star Trek:** Doppleganger. **BattleTech:** Mech Alternatives. **Warhammer:** 40,000: Sunstroke. **Paranoia:** Plan 9 from Out-R-SPC.

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Traveller: Hazardous Cargoes, Twisting Tech Levels, Wrong Way Valve. **MegaTraveller:** Designer's Notes. **Twilight:** 2000: USSR: 2000, Combat Examples. **2300 AD:** The Sung: Chapter 19, Spacesuits, Earth: 2300.

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Traveller: A World on its Own, Swift Water by John M. Ford. **Twilight:** 2000: Equipment for Armor Crews, Native Canadian Ranger Regiment, Small Patrol Craft. **2300 AD:** Cayuga-Class Close Escort, The Xiang: Chapter 19, Papers and Passports. **Star Wars:** Alone Against the Empire (A Solitaire Adventure).

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Traveller: A Body Swayed to Music, Portable Air Lock. **Twilight:** 2000: Tyger, Tyger, Burning Bright. **2300 AD:** Three Blind Mice. **Space:** 1889: From Above and Below. **Warhammer:** 40,000: The Undead of Space. **Star Wars:** Wookiees Amok. **Renegade Legion:** The 982nd Pursuit Wing. **Star Trek:** Warp Factor Equivalency Tables. **Star Fleet Battles:** Border Dispute.

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Traveller: Tournament by John Marshall, Tho Tuktaar Connection, Cargo: A Merchant Prince Variant. Striker Weapon System Revisited, Enhanced Sector Generator. **Twilight:** 2000: Twilight: 2000 Air Module.

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Traveller: Grandfather's Worlds, Journalism and the Stars, Church of the Chosen Ones. **Twilight:** 2000: Target 2000: The Hit List for WWII, Twilight: 2000 Consolidated Price List, The Mexican Army, The Inland Waterway. **2300 AD:** The North American Research League.

33

Traveller: Project Farstar, IRIS. **Twilight:** 2000: Haute Cuisine à la 2000, Twilight: 2000 Equipment List, USSR: 2000 Part II. **2300 AD:** Lone Wolf, North America 2300, Davout, Stutterwarp Revisited.

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MegaTraveller: The Hinterworlds. **Twilight:** 2000: Rifle River. **2300 AD:** The American Marines, French Lieutenant's Connection. **Space:** 1889: Ether Ship Etiquette. **BattleTech:** Sky Eyes, The Waco Rangers—An In-Depth Look.

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Traveller: Generating IRIS Characters for Traveller. **Twilight:** 2000: Twilight: 2000 Mobile Artillery: Mortars, The Compleat NPC. **2300 AD:** Thorez, INAP, The 2300 AD Revision. **Space:** 1889: Cloudship Design, Ironclads and Ether Flyers—Design Notes Before the Fact, The Canals of Mars, The Ether, A Smoking Flax.

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Traveller: K'kree Starships: A Human Perspective, Across the Imperium, Double Feature, Behind the Scenes. **Twilight:** 2000: Ultralights: A Closer Look, Wilderness Travel and Pursuit, Air Module II. **2300 AD:** The Astronomischen Rechen-Institut.

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Guest reviewer John Theisen takes a look at *Dark Future* and *Space Hulk*, two Games Workshop products. Then, Julia Martin reviews "something completely different" for Second Edition AD&D—*Spelljammer*.

Dark Future

Games Workshop Ltd. \$47.95. (U.S.)

Game Design: Richard Halliwell
Background Material: Marc Gascolgne

Boxed set. Plastic miniatures, track sections, counters, dice, other accessories, 104-page softbound rule book.

For two or more players.

With the occasional random drive-by shooting and accidents involving semi-loads of toxic waste, you knew things were bad on our highways. Only you didn't know they were *this* bad!

The setting is North America in 1995, and everything is a mess. Due to the (suddenly accelerated?) combined effects of pollution, desertification, and a rising sea level:

- The Great Lakes aren't so great anymore.
- Niagara Falls is a muddy trickle.
- The Atlantic coastline has been inundated with flooding.
- Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma are desert.
- River traffic on the refuse-clogged Mississippi has nearly stopped.

And that's only to name a few of the ecological changes for the worse.

If all that isn't bad enough, 10 years ago (in 1985!?), the U.S. Senate passed the Deregulation of Law Enforcement Act, also known as the Enderby Amendment. The responsibility for law enforcement in many parts of the United States was immediately transferred from the government to the private sector. Cities have been sharply divided into Policed Zones (PZs) and Non-Policed Zones (NoGo). Anarchy reigns as gangs and outlaws vie for control over vast expanses of America. Huge corporations, the mafia, and yakuza (Japanese syndicates) are among those who make or

break the laws. Freelance law enforcers, known as Sanctioned Operatives, have become available for hire on a strictly mercenary basis.

This is where the players come in, as they assume the role of Ops (as the Operatives are known) and/or some variety of outlaws. Combat, usually very quick and often very permanent, takes place on the highways between heavily armed cars and motorcycles. It's "cops and robbers" all over again—only it's much harder now to tell the good guys from the bad.

At first glance, *Dark Future* contains a bewildering array of brightly colored components. There are numerous colorful counters printed on heavy laminate cardstock in various geometric shapes, dependent on type. The 17 large track sections are all printed on a very heavy laminate material and include everything from 10 straight sections to a railroad crossing. Then there are the plastic miniatures, with lots and lots of little pieces—a total of 14 sprues' worth of components including four vehicle chassis, four bikes, two Interceptor bodies, two Renegade bodies, and assorted weapons and related hardware. Car assembly is an easy, snap-together process.

An introductory (read-me-first) rule flier (confusingly labeled "Tournament Rules"), a 104-page, two-hole-punched rule book (with perforated pages), a cardstock spin template, a 17-inch-long transparent acetate range ruler, three dice (one slightly larger than the others), and two semireusable cellophane bags complete the product, packaged in a large, three-foot box. My only criticism about the components is that the cover of the rules book is printed on standard glossy-coated book paper and will not hold up to much wear and tear (I know, I know, that's why the pages were punched for notebook use!).

Even before you've read the introductory rules, don't let the thickness of the lavishly illustrated rule book deter you! More than half of this book consists of background articles, table summaries, and blank forms. Some of the mini-essays included are on the United

States, city life, NoGo, desert roads, Sanctioned Operatives and Agencies, renegades, the media, and even a glossary of slang terms used in the *Dark Future*!

The game mechanics are clean and quite simple to learn after just a little practice. Turn movement is based on each vehicle's speed, with eligible vehicles having the option of performing certain "semiabstract" actions during each phase. These include drifting, U-turning, accelerating, braking, reversing, regaining control, ramming, or shooting (offensive or defensive weaponry). Also covered are hazard rolls, critical hits, panic braking, a variety of ram and crash maneuvers, and eight scenarios of increasing complexity on which to try various tactics.

The background articles and illustrations are interesting—many of them are darkly humorous (most intentionally, and some possibly not). A few worth special mention are the Chevrolet logo on the rule book cover, the reference to a trucker named Gerry Ford (no relation), a somber-looking cop wearing a "smiley-face" button, and the idea of the yen as legal currency in some U.S. states. (If only the cartographers in 1995 would learn how to correctly spell San Bernardino, Tijuana, Albuquerque, and Cincinnati, and move the Appalachians out of Mississippi and back into Tennessee where they belong!)

However, for gamers familiar with Steve Jackson Games' *Car Wars*, a comparison between the two is inevitable. Since this is a game about cars, an automotive analogy seems appropriate: Both a Ford and a Rolls can take their occupants where they want to go, but they are not the same. All things being equal, a Rolls costs a lot more. *Dark Future*, being what Games Workshop describes as a "3-D Roleplay Hobby Game," puts much emphasis on its components. Mounted track sections are nice; the counters are visually appealing (if perhaps a bit garish); and the miniatures are large enough to paint in detail. If this is to your taste, then the game may suit you well.

Nevertheless, I was disappointed—

not by the game's background setting or by the component quality, but by a lack of versatility in design. There are only three types of vehicle and only 16 types of weapon, including passives (although I realize this may be a constraint caused by the inclusion of miniatures). Want to drive something heavier than a sports racer? Can't do it. Want to add armor to enhance survivability? Nope, *Dark Future* doesn't make that accommodation. Sadly, with something as fundamentally important to the game system as the individual vehicles used for combat, *Car Wars* seems to offer more options for customization, and that game costs a fraction of this one.

In all fairness, Games Workshop is supporting the *Dark Future* product line with at least one other product and an occasional article in *White Dwarf*. The expansion supplement (which I know of but have not seen), called *White Line Fever*, supposedly contains new rules, weapons, and vehicle systems. Even so, as a customer, I'd be pretty perturbed to find myself shelling out 48 bucks only to find out that I need to spend another \$16(!) to get what should have been included in the first place.

All in all, *Dark Future* is a good game—not a great one. If you really enjoy attractive, three-dimensional components and agree that such components make play more rewarding, this game may very well be for you. But considering the product's price, some buyers may experience a justly deserved sense of "sticker shock" without any hope of factory rebate or 2.9-percent financing.

Space Hulk

Games Workshop Ltd. \$47.95.
(U.S.)

Game Design: Richard Halliwell
Models Design: Jes Goodwin & Bob Naismith

Boxed set. Plastic miniatures, map sections, counters, dice, 28-page rule booklet, 32-page mission and background booklet.

For two or more players.

Warhammer 40,000 Rogue Trader helpful but not required.

Space Hulk is, according to the game's own subtitle, "Man Versus Alien in Desperate Battle." You see, there's this really nasty race of aliens called

Genestealers. They travel in great big derelict spaceships. They go to planets and colonize them, infecting the planet's original inhabitants to such a degree that the entire planet must be "sterilized." When Space Marines discover one of these "space hulks," they have to go in and clean the ship out. And that's where the fun begins. Desperate battle? No kidding!

The game, set in the *Warhammer 40,000 Rogue Trader* universe, takes place aboard a small area of the aforementioned ship on geomorphic corridors and rooms. Space Marines are armed with 'bolters and flamers, while Genestealers are simply armed (four arms and a tail, to be exact). The aliens are helpless against ranged combat, but they are something else in close assault, and that something else is *not* nice. Combat is to the death (though killing each other off is not necessarily each scenario's objective).

Movement is by turn and is broken down into strict phases. Every marine and Genestealer has so many action points to expend per turn, with actions including moving, turning, firing, opening doors, etc. Command points are like bonus action points for the marine player, making certain tactics possible (but the points are always in short supply). Genestealers often sneak around just out of line of sight and then attack in waves. Outnumbered Space Marines fire weapons, trying to keep the aliens from getting near enough for close assault attacks. It's a real challenge.

I know this isn't the first boardgame with widespread combat aboard an oversized spaceship (as GDW did it before with *Azhanti High Lightning*), nor is it the first boardgame with humans attacking inhuman life forms in a vaguely tunnel-like environment (remember Avalon Hill's *Starship Troopers?*). Even so, there's something very different about this game.

Maybe it's the ugly nature of the opponent, or maybe it's just the odds. Five or 10 Space Marines against a virtually unlimited supply of *them*. It's like a scene from *Aliens*, except the movie heroes had a better chance. Or maybe it's the fact that the marine player (only!) has a fixed time limitation—generally three minutes or less—for completing his part of each game turn. Not finished moving everyone yet? Too bad; turn's over. *Nasty!*

Space Hulk, another release in Games Workshop's new line of "3-D Roleplay Hobby Games," includes flamers, blip, door, command point, and overwatch fire/bolter jammed counters among its colorful counter mix. The 49 interlocking room and corridor sections include an assortment of rooms with differing numbers of exits, dead-end corridors, normal corridors of varying lengths, and intersections. Five sprues of plastic miniatures contain pieces for 20 Genestealers (with two extra arm pieces each), 10 Space Marines, and five flamer guns. Thirty-two slotta bases are included as miniatures mounts. Five dice, a small resealable plastic bag, a



28-page rule booklet, and a 32-page missions and background booklet complete the product, packaged in a large box. All components are up to Games Workshop's usual high standard for quality and use of color. Incidentally, the box art shows more of the same painting which appeared in cut-down form on the cover of *White Dwarf 113*.

The rule booklet itself is a very good read, and game mechanics are remarkably easy to pick up, especially if the gamer has any experience with miniatures rules and/or knowledge of the *Warhammer 40,000* universe. The first time I read them through took less than an hour, and I was deliberately looking for goofs. I could only find one inconsistency: On page 7, the rules state that a marine gets a sustained fire bonus of 4, 5, or 6 on third and subsequent bolter shots. According to the Summary of Play, however, fourth and subsequent shots have a sustained fire bonus of 3, 4, 5, or 6. Frankly, the latter suits me; I can't find myself rooting for the Genestealers even under the most unlikely circumstances.

The missions and background booklet sets the scene and describes six scenarios in detail. It then briefly summarizes the Genestealer race and the *Warhammer 40,000* universe for play-

ers unfamiliar with them. One thing I like very much is that *Space Hulk* does not require players to own the "parent" game. Although fully integrated with *Warhammer 40,000*, this is a stand-alone product.

Space Hulk is easy to learn and (I would venture to guess) very difficult to master. (One small piece of advice: *Always* let a less experienced player play the Genestealers three or four times before playing the marines. It's the only humane thing to do.) *Space Hulk* possesses too many tactical subtleties to evaluate and has the potential for too many new scenarios to design to permit any dust to accumulate on it for very long. Perhaps best of all, I can envision gamers with several copies between them combining their map sections and miniatures to create simply enormous minicampaigns (while not forgetting to modify the Marine player's timed phase). Despite its high price, I recommend *Space Hulk*—or, to quote an Australian friend of mine, "This one's a ripper!"

cartographer, Diesel) has done a first-rate job of providing both an interesting and useful variety of game components (see the above list). All the maps, counters, and ship cards are in color, with features clearly indicated in scale and often with a grid. A hex map is provided for close-in tactical combat. The fascinating planetary system map/display enables referees and players to show the locations of planets within a system (without giving away too much detail). It also allows them to track a spelljamming ship's progress throughout a planetary system easily when the display is used with the simple rules for movement in space found in the "Concordance of Arcane Space." Players can use stand-up silhouettes (plastic stands are provided) to represent their ships on the planetary display, and the ship cards provide the statistics, a detailed deck plan, and a full-color picture of a variety of the important ships of arcane space.

PREMISE

The premise of *Spelljammer* is that in the fantasy world of *AD&D*, space and space travel are also ruled by fantastic precepts. Any body which leaves the atmospheric envelope of a planet and enters the vacuum of wildspace carries a certain amount of atmosphere with it. A man-sized object can carry enough atmosphere to breathe from 20 to 200 minutes. The larger a body is, the more atmosphere it carries along.

After a certain size is reached, it becomes practical for ships to carry enough atmosphere with them for people on them to survive for a considerable amount of time. These ships don't have to carry enough atmosphere for years or centuries, though, because space is traversed through the use of a type of "spell engine" called a spelljamming helm. These helms (usually constructed as elaborate throne/chairs) convert the spellcasting potential of a cleric or mage into motive force—enough force to propel a ship at a velocity of 100 million miles a day. Provided that the helm does not slow down too often (which it does automatically whenever it encounters another body of over 10 tons in displacement), vast distances can be travelled in a relatively short amount of time.

Space is constructed of planetary systems of heliocentric, geocentric, and

Spelljammer

TSR, Inc. \$18.00. (U.S.)

Design: Jeff Grubb

Boxed set. Includes one 96-page rule book, one 96-page sourcebook, four large maps, three sheets of standup ships, one sheet of counters, and 20 ship cards.

Requires *AD&D Second Edition* (preferred) or *AD&D* rules.

AD & D was the first role-playing game that many role-playing gamers ever played, myself included. While most gamers have now gone on to experiment with other games and other rules systems, *AD&D* has remained popular and is still a staple in many gamers' diets. This past year has seen the appearance of several major new *AD&D* products, including a much-needed and long-debated second edition, and now the second edition's first venture off the surface of the usual campaign map and into space in *Spelljammer*.

COMPONENTS

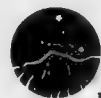
Upon opening the *Spelljammer* box the first pleasant surprise is both the quantity and the quality of the set's components. TSR (especially its fine

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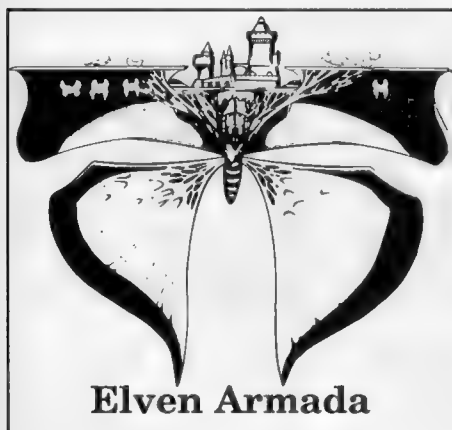
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even totally fantastic types—such as a totally flat planetary system composed of one planet held on the back of a turtle, which is on the back of another turtle, etc., as far down as one cares to travel. These planetary systems are enclosed in crystal spheres of an impervious and indestructible nature.



Elven Armada

Natural portals occur within the spheres at certain places at specific times (portals can also be created by magic); they can be used to pass through the spheres and into the phlogiston which surrounds them. The phlogiston is "a turbulent, rainbow ocean of flammable ether," a "multicolored sea upon which float the various systems within their crystal spheres" (page 10, "Concordance of Arcane Space"). The spheres move slowly within the phlogiston, and rivers and currents of phlogiston can hinder or hasten passage from one sphere to another.

Navigating both the wildspace within the spheres and the phlogiston outside them are the spelljamming ships—some of them simply modified ocean-going vessels, but many of them uniquely designed and constructed for their duties in space and the races who crew them.

The tinker gnomes of Krynn have cobbled together bizarre gnomish sidewheelers with strange devices which stick out from them in odd directions and only work under the guiding hands of the gnomes (sometimes). The elven race has the stupendous Elven Armada with its graceful flitters and powerful men-of-war with sail structures of a living, crystal-like substance which makes them look like colossal butterflies. The mind flayers have constructed nautiloids with coiled deck/roofs resembling a cross between a snail and a

squid to give them the armored protection they crave and to block out the hateful rays of the numerous fiery planetary bodies in space. These and many other ships cruise the space lanes, trading, privateering, and adventuring.

This new fantasy outer space environment opens up new frontiers for *AD&D*, providing a new locale, a swashbuckling flavor, and new denizens for any campaign.

STRONG POINTS

Spelljammer accomplishes what it sets out to do—it takes *Second Edition AD&D* into space. It provides a self-consistent rationale for all the technical problems of interstellar travel, and does not break faith with a fantastic, magical universe. Its rules for ship movement, ship combat, and ship design are clearly written and simple without being simplistic. Weapons, helm types, and ship types are discussed in enough detail for the distinctions between them to be clear, but not to the point of overkill.



Dwarven Citadel

While equipment descriptions often bore me to the point of tears, I found the section of the "Lorebook of the Void" which describes the different spelljamming ships to be not only informative but *interesting* while being informative. Mr. Grubb is to be commended for his use of an occasional humorous example from his own campaign and ability to not take himself too seriously, both of which help to brighten what could have been very dry stuff.

The "Lorebook of the Void" includes enough information for space campaigns to make most referees happy. New races and monsters, including the kindori, the dragons, the giff, and the neogi, are presented.

The three planetary systems of the Known Worlds of *AD&D*—Greyhawk, Krynn, and the Forgotten Realms—are used as examples throughout the text of both books and are described in detail in the "Lorebook."

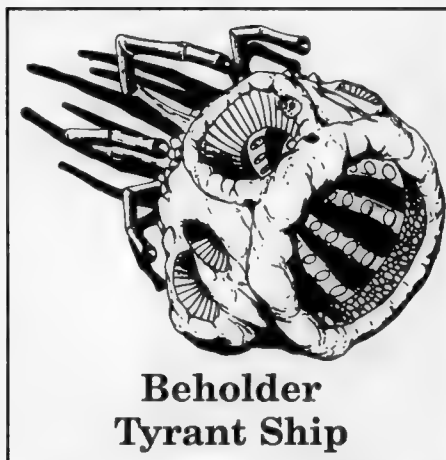
A quick, useful system for generating planetary systems in the "Concordance" provides all the essential information for creating a new planetary system for groups keen on exploration. And magic, both in and for this new fantasy environment, is not forgotten, as the "Concordance" both presents new spells for use in space and discusses space's effect on standard spells.

EVALUATION

Overall, I would recommend *Spelljammer* as a fun and different product for a system which has made "dungeon crawl" into the generic term it now is.

I like this product. How can you argue with good? What is crammed into the box for the price alone boggles the mind. The only thing I can find to complain about is the mediocre-to-poor Hollo-way line art, and even this isn't as bad as his work in the *Monstrous Compendiums*. This new game environment is especially suited for *AD&D* campaigns populated by middle- to high-level characters, as many of the monsters of space are very suited to that level of character.

If your players characters are 11th, 15th, or even higher level moneybags who have done and seen it all, *Spelljammer* will throw them some curves to put a little challenge back in their lives (and remove some of that excess gold). But adventure in space can be found by characters of any level, with some luck, some bravado, some smarts, and a spelljamming helm. Ω



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Challenge 44 will be mailed to subscribers in May and should be on game store shelves by June. This exciting issue includes:

TWILIGHT: 2000

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MEGATRAVELLER

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In My Opinion

Marc W. Miller

I go to about 12 game shows and conventions every year. In the winter months, they tend to be trade shows where manufacturers show off their coming releases to distributors and retail game stores. In the summer months, the conventions are for the game players themselves—and that's where I have the most fun.

This year, the RPGA asked me to write a **Twilight: 2000** tournament for its members, so I was naturally curious when I talked to players about their reactions to it. The RPGA ran the tournament (titled *Zdunska Wolfa*) at GenCon in mid-August.

After the event, Carl Buehler (who came up to Milwaukee from

Chapel Hill, N.C.) talked about the players he refereed: "The players had a good time. The greatest challenge I faced was pacing—making sure they didn't get bogged down in the fire-fights."

Michael Weaver was listening to this conversation and contributed his opinion: "The real fun part is watching the player characters trying to herd 25 sheep into an APC, but I can say that I know everyone had a good time."

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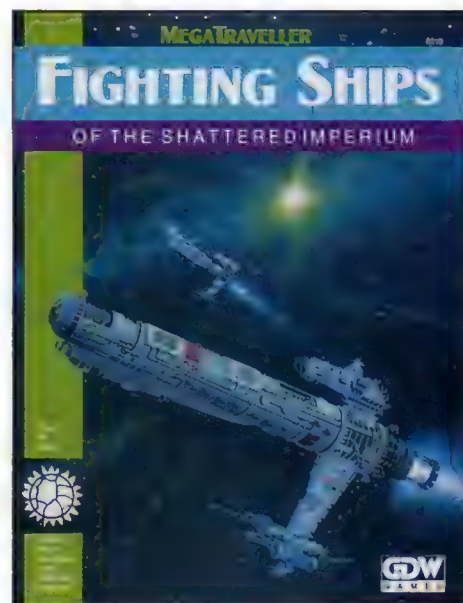
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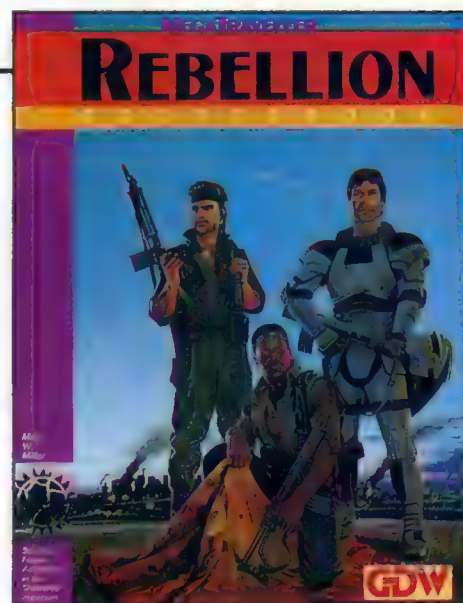
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